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THE EFFECT EMOJIS HAVE ON HEDONIC AND UTILITARIAN INSTAGRAM POSTS
IN TERMS OF EMOTIONS AND ATTENTION

Bachelor Thesis

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I have written this Bachelor thesis independently. Any ideas or data taken from other authors or other sources have been fully referenced.

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Introduction

Social media dominance in our society has increased over time due to technological improvements and the creation of more addictive platforms. Over the past ten years, the time spent on social media has increased from 90 minutes to 147 minutes per day (Statista Research Department, 2022). This sharp increase has demonstrated a move toward the digital realm. This change toward consumer first platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and now BeReal forces brands to be more creative to manifest a personal connection through image, copy, and communication styles. Branding success in today's marketplace relies on their ability to curate a deep connection with their fanbase before and after purchase to create lifelong relationships with clients.

The most eye-catching interaction comes from the visuals on platforms like Facebook and Instagram. This is because, on average, a single post holds a user's attention for two seconds, after which it is scrolled over (FacebookIQ, 2016). If the image is overcome, it is mandatory to have a copy that sparks interest in the reader. This is because the copy plays the most critical role in the sales pitch (Joseph Sugarman, 2006) and is at the core of the creation of faithful fans. It is the part of the post that communicates the brand's identity and core message to the viewer to create a long-lasting impression.

I believe that this copy can be enhanced by the presence of the right emojis, which are dependent on the brand's position on the hedonic and utilitarian scale. This is because emojis are a part of our everyday life; they are something that most of us use daily, never putting any extra thought into understanding how emojis can be used most effectively. The usage of emojis is growing daily (Keith Broni, 2020), even if knowledge of appropriate usage is lacking, especially from the perspective of how brands should use emojis. This is a problem for agencies and in-house branding teams because, at its essence, every piece of content must maximize its reach and engagement for maximal benefit.

I have chosen this topic to acquire a deeper understanding of emojis to improve my work at a social media agency. However, overall, the data gathered for this research paper is helpful to every company that is interested in branding themselves on social media. It will help them understand if and what types of emojis they should use. So far, the overall research has focused on the emojis effect on overall cohesion (Ousterhout, 2017) readability (Davis et al., 2019) and the emojis effect on likes, comments, and shares (Chen et al., 2015). The gap in this field is that almost none of the research has focused on understanding emojis on social media through eye-tracking. To fill the gap this thesis will try to solve the problem of "How do emojis affect the emotions and attention of a Instagram user?".

Aim: the aim of the thesis is to bring out how the presence of emojis in Instagram posts influences attention and emotions for both hedonic and utilitarian brands. To achieve the aim of this thesis, the following research task was set up:

- Review scientific articles on branding on social media.
- Review scientific articles on hedonic and utilitarian brands
- Review scientific articles on the usage of emojis on social media.
- Review scientific articles on emoji usage through the eye-tracking perspective.
- Conduct an eye tracking experiment coupled with three questions.
- Analyze the study results
- Give recommendations on practical emoji usage based on brand type on Instagram.

The main limitation of this research come from the fact that the test group is quite small consisting only of thirty individuals who were gathered trough convenience sampling, and all belonged to the age group of 16-23.

The upcoming thesis will consist of two theoretical chapters and two empirical ones. The theoretical part is divided into two chapters; the first one will detail branding on social media and the differences between hedonic and utilitarian brands. The second chapter will focus on emojis and their presence on social media from an eye tracking and non-eye tracking perspective. Combining these two chapters will help the researcher divide brands between hedonic and utilitarian categories for the first test and later help decide where and what type of emojis should be placed inside the post's copy.

The empirical part will consist of the methodology and results. In the first part, an overview of the five-person test group will be discussed because it is the basis of the hedonic and utilitarian division necessary for the 30-person eye tracking experiment. The analysis will discuss how TFF "Time to the first fixation" and TFD "Fixation duration" are related to emojis, brand type, and emotions. This data gathered trough eye tracking will be helpful agencies and in-house social media teams when discussing how to increase their social media-derived benefits.

Keywords: Eye tracking, Hedonic/Utilitarian, Emojis

1. Importance of social media branding

1.1. The hedonic and utilitarian branding scale

Today it is not enough to sell a good quality product. Many of our purchase decisions come down to how we perceive the product's personality does not matter if it is a chocolate bar, car, or even a handbag. The product identities we stand behind are becoming a way to communicate our deepest desires and feelings through inanimate objects. I would say that a brand is an identity that tries to be an outlet for these desires and feeling through communication both online and offline. This fluidity and fluffiness about definitions is also seen in the literature because there is no clear definition of a brand. The definitions cover branding as logos, legal instruments, risk reduction, an image in customers' minds, value systems, evolving entities, and brand identity systems (Kuchibharla, 2012). In this theoretical part, the focus will be on brand identity systems by answering the following question: why brands are important, what makes branding on social media special, the humanization of brands, and how the brand identity is affected by hedonic and utilitarian characteristics.

A brand is a mixture of humanlike characteristics given to a product. These identities are created through advertising and sales. Every public and private company has at least one brand through which they are trying to position themselves as valuable in the eyes of their potential customers. This process is called "value creation" and is defined by the positive effect that interacting with the brand creates for the end-user. Since this process is quite often non-physical, we can consider branding as something intangible. Nowadays, we can see that calculating brand value joins other intangible assets on the balance sheet. The best example of this is Apple, whose brand equity/ brand value is currently 241 billion (Acoustic, n.d.) which makes up 10% of the company's total market cap (Csiszar, 2021). This indicates that the personal relationship between a client and a company is a significant driver of its current valuation and future growth.

This brand-based evaluation in numeric terms tries to communicate how well known, liked and trusted the company is in the eyes of the consumers. To achieve this type of company growth based on branding (He & Calder, 2020), the company must try to achieve it through transparency, validity, reliability, sufficiency, objectivity, financial behavior, and legal parameters (Statista, 2021). From my perspective, this reliance on branding to generate revenue must become the norm because it's easy to create a similar product but impossible to sell the same emotional connection. We are already seeing this shift the fact that companies include their brand values in their annual reports to help analysts determine the stock's actual price (Dutordoir et al., 2015; Fournier & Madden, 2008). Some new

findings indicate that every company should include it in their annual reports to give a more holistic perspective (He & Calder, 2020). The number is a quick tool that illustrates the emotional bond between the company and the customers. This process turns the intangible idea of a brand into cold hard cash through the value of long-lasting brand relationships.

This deep need for strong brands has been created through intense competition between companies providing the same services/products in the same market. In these types of markets, where product value propositions are identical, the differentiating factor becomes the emotional connection that the brand can create and sustain. Branding in these situations has a goal of helping clients realize their deepest desires and needs that go further than the products themselves (Gobe, 2010) with a goal of creating a loving relationship (Rossiter & Bellman, 2012). The relationships that are being created between brands and individuals are turning more human-like. This means that, to some extent, brands are not treated as cold corporations but as friends, which is beneficial for brands because having this strong bond lowers the chance of switching to a competitor. In this type of emotional world, every purchase decision comes down to trust (Atulkar, 2020), where the key determinants are social presence and commitments made by the brand (Nadeem et al., 2020). Companies can no longer be selfish in their existence. They must be more like a good and trustworthy acquaintance who has the customers' best interests at heart. This process could be called the loop of creating a lifelong customer (figure 1) which illustrates how branding is creating value for the brand. In this loop, a company's value is directly related to its branding activities because they generate lifelong customer through value creation and emotional connection.

Building lifelong customers based on trust is a journey that has no end. Achieving this lifelong bond is helped by personifications, where brands try to become personally close with their potential clients. These connections happen on social media, which was not initially intended for brands. At its origin, this fast-paced connection method gave a chance for individuals to connect based on their interests, level of openness (D. Miller et al., 2016), and the content being shared (S. Asur & B. A. Huberman, 2010). The goal used to be to manifest connections between individuals, but throughout time this has turned into a breeding ground for influencers, celebrities, and brands. Throughout this thesis, the term social media will consist of the following platforms: Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter.

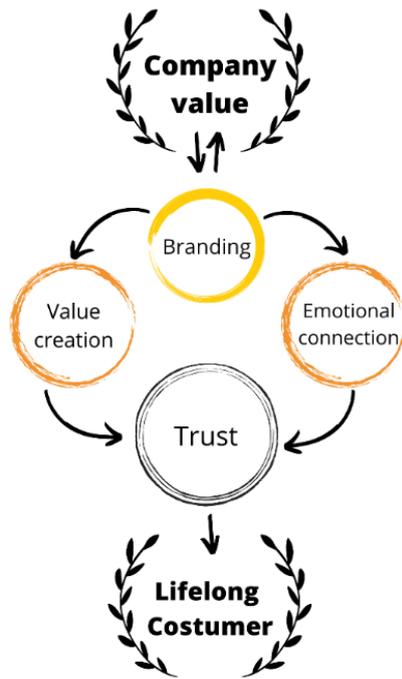


Figure 1. The loop of creating a lifelong customer

Source: Compiled by the author

Social media studies are the hottest new trend because they have such a significant effect on our lives. So far, the most popular way to research social media behaviors is through surveys (Hudson et al., 2015; Mattke et al., 2019; Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2018). However, survey data relies quite a lot on the human perspective scientist are also trying to use anthropomorphism tasks (Delgado-Ballester et al., 2020), field experiments (Mochon et al., 2017), data from platforms (Bakhshi et al., 2014; Lindell, 2018) and computer predations (Isola et al., 2011). These experiments combined will give us a good overview of how social media affect the average individual and how brands can use it to create the deeper connection.

Social media has revolutionized the way brand communications work. Before the conception of the internet, a brand's relationship with its customer was directly related to the product it was selling. In the current market, this is just a tiny component of the entire pie, where the client journey begins with research and is finished off by following and interacting with the brand on social media (Edelman, 2010). The relationships between brands and consumers have grown stronger, longer, and more potent with time. This long-term interaction after the purchase of goods has been made is a fantastic predictor of future sales (Cui et al., 2017) and word of mouth (Hudson et al., 2015), which comes to light through enhanced attitudes and behaviors of costumers toward the brand (Prakash & Kerrie, 2013). This aligns with our culture, where embracing and boycotting brands is a

daily occurrence. This type of polarization creates brand ambassadors and religious followers of the content while also generating haters, who will despise the brand for whatever it does. This ambassador mentality is best illustrated by endless lines outside of sneaker shops in the USA when new high-end shoes are released.

Achieving this type of long-term relationship between a brand and a client is made possible through paid, owned, and earned media illustrated in table 1. The most proficient at building trust is owned media (Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2018). The empirical part will analyze only Instagram-owned media because it is a balance of direct, spontaneous connection with our tech-savvy youth.

Table 1

Difference between Paid, Owned and Earned media

	Paid media	Owned Media	Earned Media
Definition	It is when the content sharing comes with a price	It is a digital marketing channel that the brand has 100% ownership in	It is content created by people who are not related to the brand
Examples from the internet	Google search engine advertising, banner ads	Website, Blog, Newsletter	Reviews, Content shareing, Media coverage, Word Of mouth
Examples from social media	Facebook, I, Twitter ads and paid influencers	Facebook, IG, Twitter Feed	Tagged posts, review posts

Source: Compiled by the author

To maximize the benefits of owned media, the company must focus on perfecting its copy, images, videos, and interaction strategies in the comment section to spur discussion. The success of this content in the long term is evaluated based on likes, comments, shares, and follower growth. This so-called success also creates brand value (Mattke et al., 2019; Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2018), awareness, and satisfaction in the eyes of the followers (Colicev et al., 2018). The platform game is a lifelong journey of generating quality content because every new piece of content is an opportunity to grow the fanbase and spark conversions. These are happening through the creation of earned media by fans (Xie & Lee, 2015) indicating how important the interplay between brands and individuals is in creating a trusting brand following. The biggest strength of an intense social media presence are brand ambassadors who carry on the companies' vision.

This new development of quality content on an originally peer-to-peer platform has

forced the brands to take on humanistic characteristics. This new wave generates brand love (Delgado-Ballester et al., 2020) which can be compared to being in a relationship with a brand (MacInnis & Folkes, 2017). In my perspective, this new approach will become our reality where the lines between brands and individuals become blurred, as is the case for influencers who are becoming out with their name brands. The more humanlike brands can become, the more individuals can see a reflection of themselves in them (A.A.S.n, 2019) which increases likes, comments, shares (Chen et al., 2015), and value-generating activities (Mochon et al., 2017). I would go even as far as to say that this move is taking us closer to becoming a global village where every purchase is made based on trust. This also shines through the idea that purchase decisions are becoming more emotion-based, where we are not buying usability but for the social value associated with them.

To fully utilize these benefits, a brand must understand how to communicate a message in a way that matches the feel of the platform. In my opinion, Twitter is short and snappy, Instagram has an image focus, Tik-Tok is entirely video-based, and Facebook is trying to be a mixture of everything. However, the one thing that is certain on every platform is that having more likes increases the likeability and interest in the content (Bradley et al., 2017; Mattke et al., 2019; Pütten et al., 2018). Starting this endless cycle of approval is complex, and every brand has its way of reaching this, but some general guidelines will be examined throughout the rest of the theoretical chapters.

In this theoretical part, we will be diving deep into Instagram to understand the factors that affect post quality based on brand identity. Since Instagram is quite image-centric, the first thing someone sees after opening their feed is an image and text with 125 characters, after which “read more” appears. In this type of feed, the first 2 seconds of seeing a piece of content are critical. They will determine for how long the person will spend reading it (FacebookIQ, 2016). On Instagram, this length is determined by how appealing or interesting the image is. To maximize the chance of creating an interesting image, they should include faces (Bakhshi et al., 2014; Isola et al., 2011), especially the left cheek (Lindell, 2018), sexualized content (Hyanghee Park & Joonhwan Lee, 2017), easily comprehensible content (Bower et al., 1975; Moravec et al., 2018) and redder colors (Isola et al., 2011). These combinations used in the proper context in a non-repetitive manner will increase the likelihood of long-lasting impressions moving from the image to the textual.

On Instagram after the image has been comprehended, the viewer moves into the textual context. It starts with the headline that has a 125-character limit which expands into

text with a characterlimit of 2200 (Zote, 2021). Where a catchy 125-character headline is an integral part of the formula, it must manifest itself quickly in our ever-shortening attention span. The goal here is to give enough information to create significant gaps in understanding in the reader's heads (Hapsah, 2008; Heath & Heath, 2007) with specific words to spark interest (Keenan Venuti, n.d.) to build on the already existing idea generated by the image. The entire goal of the text is to use the inverted pyramid journalism technique to move from the "must-know" to "nice to know" to pull fans along the path (Lotfinejad et al., 2020; Schade, 2018). Using this technique and putting the brand's personality into it gives a perfect chance for fast, personalized mass communication while also giving ambassadors a chance to commit further.

Out of the many possible ways to classify brands, I will use the hedonic-utilitarian scale because of the vast amount of data surrounding this branding concept. So far, the previous research has focused mostly on surveys which have helped to define brand image (Dedeoglu et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2019), brand goals (Diallo et al., 2021; Moon et al., 2012), online brand tools (Raji et al., 2019; Raji Ridwan Adetunji et al., 2017) and social media goals (Martín-Consuegra et al., 2019; Overby & Lee, 2006). Therefore a differentiating perspective, which entails moving away from survey to study the hedonic-utilitarian scale, is needed to increase our understanding of the concept.

In terms of this study, the focus will lay on two different types of brand identities. I believe that every brand can be placed on the utilitarian-hedonism scale based on its product characteristics and communicated identity. This spectrum is visible in table 2. The table indicates that a brand always has both characteristics, but a different concentration of each, on average, ranges from hedonic to utilitarian, where none and both options are rare. This is supported by realizing that these factors that define hedonism and utilitarianism can be measured and quantified (Voss et al., 2003). While both ideas come from philosophy, they are quite the opposite. At its core, Hedonism focuses on desires and is driven by the core belief that we are only motivated by either pain or pleasure (Moore, Andrew, 2004). In comparison, utilitarianism is based on the philosophical idea that the best option is always the one that creates the most good (Driver, Julia, 2014). This framework has been transferred over to marketing to understand better what core emotions or needs the company tries to affect through its products.

Table 2

Hedonic and Utilitarianism Scale

	Weak Utilitarian Characteristics	Strong Utilitarian Characteristic
Strong Hedonic Characteristics	Hedonic brand (Nightclubs)	Strong at both (Apple)
Weak Hedonic Characteristics	No identity Example (Supermarket brand of cookies)	Utilitarian brand (LHV)

Source: Compiled by the author

Back in the old days, defining a brand on this scale was easy because it was defined by the product being sold. Classical hedonic brands products were flowers, designer clothes, music, sports cars, luxury watches, and chocolate (Khan et al., 2005). Nowadays, every company that is building its identity based on emotions, entertainment, and pleasure can be considered hedonic (Liao, 2021). This decoupling has given brands the opportunity and obligation to curate their reality on every level of communication that is indifferent to the product. This new perspective on hedonism has given companies a more profound understanding of how social, emotional, and epistemic values (Kazakeviciute & Banyte, 2012) affect specific shopping and behavioral patterns of potential clients (An & Han, 2020; Kazakeviciute & Banyte, 2012). Indicating that a strong hedonic brand has the power to warp clients' emotions concerning their identity.

On the opposite side of hedonism, utilitarianism focuses more on physical and rational values. Classically utilitarian products would have been microwaves, detergents, minivans, home security systems, or personal computers (Khan et al., 2005). In today's society, it is clear that this list is too limiting so the concept has expanded to products whose goal is to be practical and functional while also getting the job done (Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2000). This new perspective on an entire group of products creates industry professionals whose sole purpose is to make people's lives easier by educating them on their products. As a whole, this connection contributes to the reality of increasing brand trust (Ashfar Adams, 2016; Diallo et al., 2021) while expanding the knowledge base of its followers (Johar & Sirgy, 1991). Building this identity as a community intelligence leader gave brands the responsibility and glory of leading us towards a better future.

Of course, some brands manage to fill both shoes simultaneously and ideas that achieve none. Apple is the perfect example of a company that manages to do both because they serve tech-savvy individuals and Mac enthusiasts (Lin et al., 2018). On the other hand, products that usually completely fail to deliver on having an identity (Halilovic, 2013) would

be supermarket store brand candles and shovels (Lin et al., 2018). The success on this scale comes from building on a brand's core values and giving individuals a deeper meaning to stand behind on top of the product

At its core, I would say that both Hedonic and Utilitarian ideals start from entirely different perspectives with different online and offline goals, illustrated in Appendix A. There is also quite a lot of overlap in terms of the tools in the toolbox and the outcomes in customers' attitudes. When we talk about social media, it is essential to understand that both styles of sales/advertising on the platform are effective. However, the effect on the individual might be completely different. Going from High Loyalty with a low engagement rate to a high interaction rate with low loyalty.

Brands are not defined by their product but by their identity. In the case of hedonic brands, these characteristics are trying to create the desired feelings through: entertainment, escapism (Kim et al., 2019), servicescape (Alam et al., 2020; Dedeoglu et al., 2018), fun, and expressiveness (Peters et al., 2007). This is strongly contrasted by utilitarian factors and tools which focus on performance (Johar & Sirgy, 1991; J. L. Lee et al., 2014) product benefits (Bairrada et al., 2018; Meenaghan, 1995; Moon et al., 2012) knowledge functionality (Johar & Sirgy, 1991) safety (Hsieh, 2002) quality (Teresa Montaner & José-Miguel Pina, 2008). These characteristics are the backbone of every brand. The dominance of the character helps create differentiation, giving a clear signal which brands are worth following and which should be forgotten.

When a strong brand identity is achieved through the core brand characteristics, every brand can expect to some extent, to have the following overarching benefits: Loyalty (Alam et al., 2020; Albayrak et al., 2020; Moon et al., 2012) and long term relationships (Halilovic, 2013; Huber et al., 2015) which will increase the bottom line of the company through sales (Rima, 2019). Hedonic brands will primarily benefit from strong attachment (Diallo et al., 2021) and leisure consumption (Peters et al., 2007). Utilitarian brands on the other hand, achieve trust (Ashfar Adams, 2016; Diallo et al., 2021), perceived quality (Moon et al., 2012) and an educated client base (Johar & Sirgy, 1991). This combination of benefits shows that, on average, having a specific type of brand will create a situation where some benefits are easier to achieve. Therefore, it is crucial to understand what emotions we want to embellish when picking the correct brand type.

There are some differences in terms of tools that help hedonic and utilitarian brands reach their full potential online. Hedonic brands should focus more on online reviews (Chakraborty & Bhat, 2017, 2018), gift promotion (Teresa Montaner & José-Miguel Pina,

2008), and using animated graphs and pictures on their content (Tsang & Tse, 2005). At the same time utilitarian brands must offer discounts (Teresa Montaner & José-Miguel Pina, 2008), quality information (Martín-Consuegra et al., 2019), and owned media (Colicev et al., 2018). Luckily every brand will benefit from user-generated content (Raji Ridwan Adetunji et al., 2017; Rima, 2019), social media advertising, and sales content (Raji et al., 2019). This tool differentiation does not indicate that brands should limit themselves in terms of tools, but it means that some tools are just more effective.

Through the correct usage of quality social media tools, the following benefits can be harnessed by both brands: intentional behavior and goal orientation by the potential clients (Martín-Consuegra et al., 2019). The unique benefits of hedonic brands strengthen this: High interaction (Pöyry et al., 2013), credibility (Raji et al., 2019), and a firm purchase intention (Chakraborty & Bhat, 2018). In contrast, utilitarian brands can reap benefits through Cognitive engagement and high loyalty (Louisa Ha & Mohammad Abuljadail, 2019). They are showing again how vital a quality social media account can be in the modern age—bringing many different types of benefits that change based on the perception of brand identity.

As we have seen so far, having a quality brand is mandatory for companies interested in creating lifelong customers. In our modern society, this road is enhanced by using the correct social media channels to enhance the brand's hedonic and utilitarian values. Through this value creation, brands manage to differentiate themselves from competitors and create trust with customers through their actions. In terms of this thesis, the most significant effort is to understand owned media because this is under the complete control of the creators. Meaning brands can create their own humanized characteristics to appeal to our modern individual's desire to buy from brands that match their own identity.

1.2. Maximizing the benefits of emojis on social media

As discussed earlier, there are many ways to enhance the effectiveness of social media campaigns. For this chapter, we will focus on the textual part of an Instagram post, and we are going to do it from the perspective of emojis. These small digital images are a part of our everyday lives, whether we like them or not. They are available on almost every device and platform with endless options to portray feelings and things in the proper context, like here “My 🚲 journey made me 😞 because my tire broke, luckily, I had a 🍪 to save my day 😊”. They have an incredible power to enhance communication for both brands and individuals. So far, primarily individuals have embraced their full capabilities while brands

are lacking behind. This must change in our modern social media-dominant community. In the following chapter, emojis will be discussed from the following perspectives: Emojis as a language, how emojis change emotions, how emojis can enhance brands, and we will finish off by taking a closer look into how eye tracking can give us a deeper insight.

Emojis are tools to communicate emotions through small digital images that convey many different types of things, ideas, and emotions. They can be considered the equivalent of gestures in a face-to-face conversation (Alshenqeeti, 2016; Gawne & McCulloch, 2019; Koh et al., 2019), where they create the desired emotion (Boutet et al., 2021). These emotions can be achieved through using emojis to enhance the context created by words. At the time of writing this paper, there are 3633 official emojis in existence (*FAQ*, n.d.) of which one has been crowned word of the year by oxford (Oxford language, n.d.) When just looking at the word count, the emoji language is 30 times bigger than the smallest official language (Morin, 2015). Originally emojis were intended to be a part of the written tongue, but as time has gone on, they have found their way into picture and video formats as well. They contribute to our language, making it easier to share feelings and opening a route to load every conversation on every level of communication emotionally.

Each emoji has an individualized meaning in terms of the original definition and the normalized definition it has transformed into overtime. This transformation comes from an already existing relationship that has created insider communication and now brings people closer to each other (Wiseman & Gould, 2018). Which perfectly represents the idea of a language where original meanings evolve through time to fulfill the community's needs. The emoji language has roots in hieroglyphics and cave paintings which now aids communications among tech-savvy individuals (Alshenqeeti, 2016), making messages more explicit (Alimemaj & Hyso, 2017) through appealing to our visual nature (Kadry, 2021). These small pictograms can be considered a more natural way of communicating. Emojis are currently dominating the text-based communications sphere (Hunt, 2021) where they are the most popular way of passing on emotions (Simpson, Ryan et al., 2020). Emojis have managed to transcend culture and language, being popular everywhere in both public and private communications.

Since emojis are quite like languages, there are many possible ways of understanding them. The research methods are similar for both individual usage and brand usage. The studies consist primarily of surveys (Franco & Fugate, 2020; Garcia et al., 2022; Herring & Dainas, 2018; Prada et al., 2018) and social media observations (Gawne & McCulloch, 2019; Sampietro, 2017; Yan & Hong, 2017), eye tracking (Barach et al., 2021; Cohn, Neil et al.,

2018; Robus et al., 2020), lab tests (Guadagno et al., 2013; Smith & Rose, 2020) and online experiments (Lohmann et al., 2017). These different types of strategies illustrate how many ways there are to understand emojis and any language.

Emoji categories differ from the classical language because nouns, verbs, and adjectives are quite useless when describing emojis. The most classical emoji division of types can be seen in table 3 whit examples. This is what makes the emoji language so universal because no grammar is needed to express the correct emotions, even if the ideas themselves might be fuzzy. This is backed up by the realization that seven out of the top ten most used emojis are smileys (emojipedia, 2021) which have a singular goal of communicating emotions. Emojis convey only one emotion/object /situation each and do it clearly. This universalness and the need to build on an already existing language makes emojis something that will never leave written communication.

Table 3

Examples of emoji types

Emoji type	Example of emoji
Smileys & People	
Animals & Nature	
Food & Drink	
Activity	
Travel & Places	
Objects	
Symbols	
Flags	

Source: Compiled by the author based on Emojipedia

Each emoji has a different meaning; therefore, cohesion between a word and an emoji is crucial. Understanding of them is manipulated by the cognitive load of the emojis themselves, where the more straightforward, more common, and visually stable emojis are the most likely to be understood (Ousterhout, 2017) but only if they are cohesive with the context. The understanding of emojis begins in the parafovea vision. If they are placed before the word, they are usually skipped in the actual reading process if they match the context (Barach et al., 2021) This ends up speeding up reading (Boutet et al., 2021). An emoji should

duplicate existing ideas in the text to maximize delivery.

Like any word in a sentence, an emoji can be placed in many different spots. The most common possible options are portraits in table 4. In everyday practice, emojis would be placed in parts of the sentences where they replace a coma or a dot giving the best emotional representation of the previous sentence and the upcoming one (Provine et al., 2007) gravitating more toward the end of the sentence (Herring & Dainas, 2018; Sampietro, 2017). This type of punctuation is a crucial determinant of reading times and sentence comprehension. Emojis slow down reading times when placed at the end and increase comprehension when placed in the middle, which has been discovered through the eye-tracking (Cohn, Neil et al., 2018; Robus et al., 2020). Placement plays a significant role in the success of an emoji's ability to achieve the desired outcome.

Table 4

Potential emoji sentence placements

Placement of emoji	Example
No emojis (Control)	Don't bite the hand that feeds you
Only emojis	✗ 😊 🖐️ 🍌
Beginning of sentence	✗ Don't bite the hand that feeds you
End of sentence	Don't bite the hand that feeds you 🍌
Middle of sentence	Don't bite the hand that 🍌 feeds you
Replace entire word	✗ bite the 🖐️ that feeds you
Before words	Don't bite the 🖐️ Hand that feeds you
After words	Don't bite the Hand 🖐️ that feeds you

Source: compiled by the author

Decoding the emoji-filled message starts from the sentence structure and is enhanced by emoji placement. For an emoji to be conversationally understandable and offer a fast-reading experience, it should be present in short to medium-sized sentences (H. Miller et al., 2017; Ousterhout, 2017). Where they build on the already existing textual context to enhance the ideas through visual representations. Emojis are best suited for usage when they represent something already present to increase the core message's comprehension and lower the chance of misrepresentation (Yan & Hong, 2017) especially effective if placed to the left of the embellished word (Ousterhout, 2017). Since emojis do not come with context, they can only enhance an already existing conversation.

On top of the grammatical themes affecting understanding of emojis, communication is also warped by experience differences of individuals. Cross-cultural usage differences are illustrated by the frequency of usage and the emojis that best represent the surrounding area. However, the emoji types ratios mentioned in table 3 are constant from culture to culture

(Guntuku et al., 2019). This is because different cultures notice different aspects of reality (Yamamoto et al., 2020). The emojis a person connects the most with must align with who they are and whom they perceive others to be. This calculation comes down to the relationships between individuals and their current mental state (Völkel et al., 2019). This is best represented by sensual texts between lovers where flirtatious types of emoji usage increase dramatically (Weissman, 2019a). This comes to light because these images can visualize feelings that only a fantastic writer could bring to life. These emotionally loaded conversations are luckily not hindered by gender differences because emojis are perceived similarly (Herring & Dainas, 2018) even though females are more prone to using them (Prada et al., 2018). These communicational benefits transfer over to older people as well, who have a more challenging time understanding the emotions behind the written text. This is because emoticons are a cue to understanding written ideas (Garcia et al., 2022). Emojis are a multifaceted communication tool because every person has a different understanding of them in any given sentence.

The changes talked about so far are essential caveats to using emojis efficiently. These ideals can only be optimized for one platform and one device at a time because emojis have different representations between them (D. Miller et al., 2016; Wiseman & Gould, 2018), changing the emojis meaning a little bit each time (Franco & Fugate, 2020) which might be creating millions of wrongful messages every day (Miller Hillberg et al., 2018). Therefore, knowing where the communication is happening is the most critical part of emoji usage to avoid misunderstanding.

Emotions are the tools that unite every human; they are something that we are built to express and understand in a heartbeat. This connection is hard to achieve on Instagram, where sponsored posts and quick delivery are the norms. Emojis can lower the feeling of intrusiveness (J. Lee et al., 2021) in contrast, small digital images can infect the reader with the desired emotion (Lohmann et al., 2017) to generate the desired brand identity. It can be said that emojis speak louder than words since they bring much-needed emotional clarity (Volkan Yakın & Oya Eru, 2017). This type of emotional connectedness is the factor that drives customer loyalty (Labrecque, 2014). The effort put into intelligent emoji usage by brands is currently one core tool that must be utilized to maximize growth in today's social media market.

Every brand can achieve some overarching themes through the correct use of emojis. When the brand's goal is to feel innovative (Volkan Yakın & Oya Eru, 2017) and/or personal (Vangelov, 2017), then emojis have the power to create this desired feeling in newcomers to

the brand. This emotional interplay created by emojis leads to an increased interaction rate between the creator and the follower on Twitter (J. Lee et al., 2021; McShane et al., 2021). The same goes for FB Comments and shares (Fontein, 2017). They create a stronger emotional bond between the targeted person and the creator to build a lasting brand relationship. These trends are not convertible one-to-one from one platform to another but indicate an overall trend of emoticon dominance in the brand communication process.

Creating a strong emotional contagion is critical in gathering new clients and keeping the already existing ones engaged. Achieving the emotional contagion starts from strong stimuli portraying happiness or sadness (Wild et al., 2001). It can change the group dynamic even in the direst situations (Cary Cherniss & Daniel Goleman, 2001) or warp the habits of the community through emojis (Lotfinejad et al., 2020) or without (Hartmann et al., 2011). These studies have focused on the offline but can be applied to the online realm. The stronger the generated emotion in the post, the more likely it is to be shared (Guadagno et al., 2013; Stan & Ana, 2015). Because the goal of online communication is to share emotions, emojis should quickly be integrated. This interplay of emojis builds a strong relationship with clients (Smith & Rose, 2020), which comes through the increased intensity of emotions generated by emoji (Erle et al., 2021). The correct use of emojis has the power to strengthen the brand through stronger bonds and draw in new individuals.

Emoji usage might not be correct for every brand in every situation because they appeal to emotions, not rationality. The more hedonic a company's brand type is, the more efficiently it will be conveyed through emojis (Das et al., 2019; Davis et al., 2019) because contagion is based on emotional distribution. There might also be a substantial effect on certain feelings like extraversion (Raco, 2021), playfulness, customer initiative, and emotional resonance, primarily through directive speech (Smits, 2021). These outcomes mostly play off hedonic values: therefore, I would go as far as to say that the usage of emojis in utilitarian branding situations should be done very sparingly or, in some cases, not at all. For both brands, it is known that overreliance on emojis might destroy the client's relationship (McShane et al., 2021). Emojis are like everything else in life. They must be used with caution; using too many will destroy the brand using too few or, in the wrong context, will end up doing the same. Moderation is vital in emojis communication.

So far, we have discussed emojis' effect on feelings or interactions. However, since many internet users do not interact with content, they are just passive viewers, it is crucial to understand their perspective through eye-tracking. It will help us correctly analyze what changes happen to visual interactions based on the presence of emojis. This is a tool to see

where someone is looking during a given time (Tobii, n.d.). The idea of eye tracking is quite old, where the first studies were conducted in 1879, even though business use started only this century (EyeSee, 2014). This technology can be used in areas where people's visual attention is needed; it gives valuable insight into focus points while creating essential connections between otherwise unnoticeable changes.

Our eyes are tools that connect us with the outside world. They are something that helps us instantly comprehend what we are focusing on (Kristian Tangsgaard Hvelplund, 2014). This data collection system of our brain can constantly switch between anything in our direct and peripheral vision. This switching of focus is thanks to our brain's ability to comprehend things 250 milliseconds before our attention can catch up (Kenneth Holmqvist & Richard Andersson, 2017). So far, eye tracking can catch everything that happens after the visual focus has been reached.

Eye-tracking helps us collect data based on gazes, blinks, and pupil dilations (Jakob de Lemos et al., 2008). The collection of this data is technologically complex but incredibly simple for the practitioner. While comprehending these viewing patterns is tricky because a singular data point can be translated in many ways. For example, a longer TFD can indicate a deep interest or that the information is too complicated to understand (TobiiPro, n.d.-b). In both cases, the chance of remembering the thing goes up for entirely different reasons (Huebner & Gegenfurtner, 2010). This ability to focus and remember is directly related to emotions where the data is gathered by analyzing 126 facial points. After which, it is possible to predict when an individual gets bored of a piece of content and wants to move along (TobiiPro, n.d.-a). In unison, these two techniques try to give a more comprehensive understanding of the human condition.

Emojis affect our emotions. Therefore, they must follow some sort of absorption pattern, which can be analyzed through eye-tracking. Absorption of emojis is quite close to how words are perceived on a linguistic level (Weissman, 2019) even if the speed of understanding comes down to too many different grammatical factors (Herring & Dainas, 2018; Provine et al., 2007; Sampietro, 2017) and logicity (Barach et al., 2021; Cohn, Neil et al., 2018; Robus et al., 2020). Choosing the correct emojis is as crucial as choosing the right word. Both are necessary because emojis increase the post's positive feeling (Bashirzadeh et al., 2021) but are skipped on social media if placed at the ends of the sentences (Vaiciukynaite, 2019). This shows how knowledgeable someone must be to use emojis to their full potential.

As seen so far, emojis are a part of our digital communication, showing no sign of

decline. Currently, brands are losing out when they are not considering using emojis in their branding. Integrating emojis into the company’s communication process is critical in today’s age of achieving strong emotional connections (Erle et al., 2021; Smith & Rose, 2020). The biggest weakness of the field comes from the minimal research into emojis in the social media context through the lens of eye-tracking. This must change because most people looking at the created content are passive consumers.

As discussed in this chapter, emojis are visual tools to enhance the text, especially on social media, to convey emotions that would otherwise not be noticed. The most significant enhancement comes from choosing the correct emojis that are most cohesive with the text itself. This cohesion must consider platforms, devices, cultural differences, and placement in the sentence because they all play a part in decoding the visual message. The correct usage would create more explicit messages and a better emotional connection with potential and already existing clients. However, it is essential to realize that the benefits only come in the case of correct usage, which depends on the brand's placement on the hedonic- utilitarian scale. To better understand emojis, the research part will focus on comparing Instagram posts with and without emojis of companies on different sides of the utilitarian-hedonic scale.

2. Emoji analysis on Instagram

2.1. Methodology

The empirical part of this thesis will consist of two chapters. The first chapter describes the sampling and mythology and introduces the Instagram posts used in the study. In the second chapter, the focus will be on the outcome and analysis of the data. This is done to achieve a deeper understanding of how emojis affect TFF, TFD, and emotions. To understand what type of emojis should be used by hedonic and utilitarian brands on Instagram.

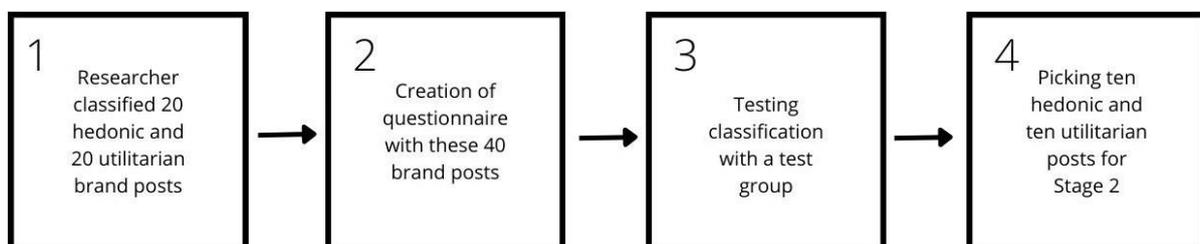


Figure 2. Mythology steps for stage 1

Source: compiled by the author

The data collection can be divided into two stages. The goal of the first stage was to define ten utilitarian and ten hedonic Instagram posts so they could be used in the second stage eye tracking study. To successfully achieve the goal of the first stage (figure 2) the

researcher gathered 20 hedonic and 20 utilitarian Instagram brand posts from English-speaking countries that he hoped study participants would not be familiar with to lower the bias of the previous knowledge. The brands belonged to 13 different categories: bank (2), socks (2), chocolate (4), bars (2), watches (5), jewelry (1), coffee (3), cars (4), clothes (4), cosmetics (4), events (4), alcohol (3), and drink (2). The goal was to illustrate everyday items/places/services that we would see on Instagram. This brand picking strategy was chosen to create an equal playing field for all the brands present in the study.

At the offset, the researcher categorized the posts themselves into groups of 20 hedonic and 20 utilitarian posts, but to be sure, a test group for this hypostasis was created. These 40 posts were shown to five of his friends in the age group of 17-22. Each of the individuals was asked to group the posts between “hedonic,” “utilitarian,” or “neither”. The brands with the most votes for either side were chosen. The following brands made it through to the experiment; bank (2), socks (1), Chocolate (2), Bars (1), watch (3), coffee (2), cars (2), clothes (1), cosmetics (2), events (2), alcohol (2). It is essential to note that only one brand out of the forty could get a consensus; everything else had mixed reviews. This follows the logic set out in the theory that it is not a hedonic or utilitarian question but more of a scale question where everyone has a different opinion. After the end of stage one we were left with only 20 brand posts.



Figure 3. Mythology steps for stage 2

Source: Compiled by the author

The goal set out in stage 2 (Figure 3), also called the eye-tracking stage, was to understand how TFF, TFD, and emotional states change based on emojis presence in the copy of the post. This data was gathered by the cameras, an eye tracking device, and three questions discussed after seeing all the posts. To stay true to the original brand's image, none of the visuals were manipulated, and the changes in the post copy were kept to a minimum. It is important to note that copies of some of the posts were cut short to 100-150 characters to create a more authentic Instagram experience because, after 125 characters, a "read more" text appears on the platform.

To achieve the overall goal, two test groups were created; each test group saw twenty posts, ten (five hedonic, five utilitarians) with and ten (five hedonic, five utilitarians) without

emojis and vice versa. Every post with emojis had two of them, one being a smiley and the other one being an object. The smileys were placed at sentence brakes to emphasize their logicity and typical usage (Provine et al., 2007) Objects were placed next to the word they emphasized because emojis do not have a context on their own and need text to give them meaning (Ousterhout, 2017).

To get the data, convenience sampling was used because of the ease of use. The sample consisted of 10 friends of the researcher and 20 students found at delta over three days of testing. There were four 12th graders, twenty-five bachelor's and one master's student. The study took place in the neuromarketing lab at the delta, where all the participants were seated behind a computer equipped with a Tobii eye-tracking device. Everyone was shown 20 posts from either test group 1 (Appendix B) or 2 (Appendix C). This was done in a slideshow format where the participants could choose when they wanted to move on based on how interesting they found the post. It is important to note that everyone had a randomized order dictated by the Tobii program. This strategy allows the researcher to analyze the averages to remove positioning bias. This data was gathered in the form of TFF, TFD, gaze plots and heatmaps. Later, the video from the experiment was run through another program that decodes the emotions.

After seeing all the posts, the researcher asked two memory-based questions "What brands do you remember most?", "What brand would you like to learn more about?". The first two questions were created to understand if the presence of emojis changes our ability to remember posts and do they motivate us to learn more about them. At the end there was 1 question about their dislikes while an image with all the posts was visible on the screen "Did you find any of the posts disturbing somehow?". The end goal was to see if the participant thought emojis were somehow disturbing.

2.2. Results

This subchapter will focus on the eye tracking portion of the experiment and will be divided into four distinct sections. The first section will focus on how emojis affected the overall TFF and TFD of the post. In the second part, we will look deeper into emojis themselves. The Third part will try to discover how posts can manipulate emotions based on emojis and the feeling of hedonism/utilitarianism. The final part will give an overview of the 3-question open interview. It is important to note that this study will talk about averages, and clear outliers were removed in most situations.

Table 5

Average viewing time of the social media post

	Emojis	No-Emojis	Average Watch time
Utilitarian	8.353	8.374	8.3635
Hedonic	8.625	7.894	8.2595
Average	8.489	8.134	8.3115

Source: Compiled by the author

Since this research functioned like a slideshow, we can interpret how long an individual spent watching a post on average as a sign of how interesting they found the Instagram post. This data is visualized in table 5. A post was digested for an average of 8.31 seconds, which means the average test time without the questions took $8.31 \times 20 \approx 166$ seconds. There is no overall difference between the averages of hedonic and utilitarian brands. However, there is a clear benefit to having emojis in hedonic posts because they increase the time spent looking at the post by 0.731 compared to hedonic non-emoji posts. So, from this information, we can conclude that hedonic brands perform better with emojis while utilitarian brands function better without them. To understand the power of emojis, it is essential to look at the individual parts of the post. In the case of this study, they will be looking at the Header, Image, and Copy individually which are illustrated by Figure 4.

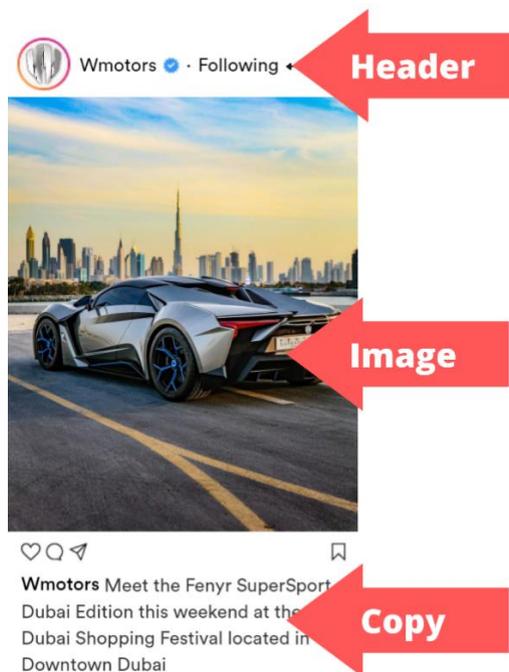


Figure 4. Virtual representation of the header, image and copy.

Source: Compiled by the author

Table 6

Average TFF for image, header and copy for both the emoji and no-emoji condition

Emoji condition	Header	Image	Copy
Emoji	2.9165	0.298	3.567
No-Emoji	3.2435	0.397	4.168

Source: Compiled by the author

Table 6 gives us an overview of the viewing order of pieces of content and how long it takes on average to see some part of the post. Since Instagram is a visual-first platform, the images are seen first in less than 0.4 seconds and consumed for the longest before the following component is identified. Then the second most visual aspect is the header, which includes the name, brand logo, and the ability to see stories. On average, it took anywhere from 2.9-to 3.24 seconds to focus on the top part of the post. In terms of the copy, it took 3.6 and 4.2 seconds on average, which means that in terms of this study, the central part of the research objective is noticed last, but it might have affected terms of the peripheral vision. The following three graphs will dig deeper into the TFD of the image, header, and text.

Table 7

Average TFD of images

Brand type	Emojis	No-Emojis	Average Watch time
Utilitarian	3.594	4.074	3.834
Hedonic	3.683	3.561	3.622
Average	3.6385	3.8175	3.728

Source: Compiled by the author

Table 7 shows us how much time an individual spends looking at the image component of the social media post. This data accommodates for $3.728/8.3115=45\%$ of the total time spent looking at the entire post. They indicate that it is one of the most critical components of the Instagram post. Therefore, it is not surprising that the presence of emojis and brand type does not have a significant effect on the viewing time. I would go as far as to suspect that this is because of the larger visual space that the image occupies compared to the other aspect. The only outlier is the utilitarian No-Emojis condition which is almost 0.5 seconds longer than the rest. Now it is time to move on to the next visually noticeable part.

Table 8

Average TFD of header

Brand type	Emojis	No-Emojis	Average Watch time
Utilitarian	1.194	0.756	0.975
Hedonic	1.04	1.006	1.023
Average	1.117	0.881	0.999

Source: Compiled by the author

Table 8 illustrates how long our attention is fixated on the header consisting of the brand name, logo, and a visual indicator that this brand has uploaded a story in the past 24 hours. This data is important because this portion of the post is the fastest way to differentiate between brands. This is thanks to the presence of the name and logo. On average, an individual spends 0.999 seconds looking at the header of any brand. For hedonic brands, the presence of emojis does not manage to change the outcome of the viewing time by any noticeable margin. However, for utilitarian brands, the presence of emojis increases the viewing time by almost $1.194/0.756=57\%$. Based on table 8, I would go as far as to say that if the desire to get individuals to notice the header of the post increases the possibility of name memorability, the brand should always use emojis. The key is to be remembered under the right conditions, which can be created by effective use of the copy.

Table 9

Average TFD of Copy

Brand type	Emojis	No-Emojis	Average Watch time
Utilitarian	3.209	2.74	2.9745
Hedonic	3.402	3.327	3.3645
Average	3.3055	3.0335	3.1695

Source: Compiled By the author

Table 9 is one of the core tables for this thesis. This is because emojis are placed in this portion of the post. Where the average reading time for these 100–150-character posts on average is 3.16 seconds which is a lot less compared to the images that take up 3.73 seconds of our attention. Again, the situation continues where emojis do not seem to have a significant effect on hedonic posts while increasing the viewing time of utilitarian posts by $3.209/2.74=17\%$. Compared to the header, a similar outcome is achieved because emojis should always be included to maximize the benefits. It is also important to note that the brand's name appears both in the header and at the beginning of the text. They both share quite a similar amount of space, but the one in the header gets quite a lot of attention while the text version is skipped. This illustration can be seen on the heatmaps in figure 5.



Figure 5. Most mentioned Utilitarian and Hedonic posts with their heatmaps

Source: Authors calculations

To visualize this data gathered from the eye tracking portion of the experiment, heatmaps were created. Heatmaps are tools to illustrate participants' fixation points on the image. They are compiled based upon the sum of focus times of all participants, and these calculations are based on TFD. The data is visualized by the fact that the redder the portion of the image, the longer individuals spend looking at it. In the program, the fixation radius was set to 80 pixels, and the opacity was 80%. These numbers were chosen to illustrate minor focus points on the image while being able to see through them to see what is under them. Posts in figure 5 represent the most mentioned hedonic and utilitarian posts from the studies questionnaire portion.

Starting from here, a few values were removed to create more consistency. The following brands were huge outliers like the TFF of lab 22 and the TFD of Komono object emoji, and Paul Smith's emotion emoji.

Table 10

Average TFD based emoji types and brand types

Brand type	Object	Emotion	Watch type for one post
Utilitarian	0.27	0.223333	0.493333333
Hedonic	0.264	0.308571	0.572571429

Source: Compiled by the author

To continue, it is essential to clarify that Emotional emojis were all yellow balls depicting certain emojis all placed in sentence brakes of the copy. In contrast, object emojis were inanimate things placed next to words they emphasized. In the case of this study, object emojis range from coffee cups, and pens to cars, while emotions range from happiness, relaxation, and surprise. In table 10, this differentiation between the two types is shown in the

format of TFD and is compared to brand type. The obvious first thing is that hedonic emotions, on average, are consumed for longer. We can also see that object emojis work efficiently for both brands when looking closer. In contrast, the presence of emotional emojis decreases the fixation time for the utilitarian brand and increases it for hedonic brands. To get a more enounced look at this data, emoji placement should also be considered.

Table 11

Average TFF of Emojis based on their placement

Placement	Utilitarian	Hedonic	Average
Beginning	5.69	5.743333	5.714
End	9.7125	7.634286	8.742666667

Source: Compiled by the author

To clarify, the copy of every post consisted of no more than 150 characters which all fit on a maximum of 4 rows. When talking about the “Begging,” it references the first two rows and the “End” to the last two rows. Table 11 illustrates how fast an emoji will be seen when placed at the beginning or the end and how significant an effect comes from the brand type. If the first fixation on the copy happens on average at 3.567 seconds for the emoji condition. This indicates that emojis follow a logical consumption pattern and are consumed as a standard copy. It is possible to say this because the first TFF of a beginning emoji happens 2 seconds after the first contact with the text, independent of the brand type. But there is a massive gap with End emojis where utilitarian ones are consumed 2 seconds slower. This might indicate that hedonic emojis fit better in the context or hedonic copy is glossed over more quickly. This lateness of noticing is a giant factor because, on average an individual stops reading the post before the end utilitarian emojis are noticed.

Table 12

Average TFF of Emoji types compared to brand type

Brand type	Emotion	Object
Utilitarian	7	7.81
Hedonic	6.938571	6.284444

Source: Compiled by the author

Table 12 shows how emoji noticing speed might be related to emoji type and brand type. From this table, we can see no noticeable difference between brand types in terms of emotional emojis. However, significant differences start to appear when looking at the object emojis. For Utilitarian posts, the TFF is 1.5 seconds later than for the hedonic post. This emojis type factor might be one of the causes why utilitarian emojis at the end of the post are seen so late.

Table 13
Average happiness based on Emoji type and brand type

	No-Emoji	Emoji	Average
Hedonic	1.27011	0.95858	1.114345
Utilitarian	0.65245	0.894125	0.810215

Source: Compiled by the author

Table 13 illustrates how emotions can be changed based on the presence of emojis and brand type. This data is gathered through an emotion counting program that has averaged out every person’s natural state on the happiness scale. This is done by recording and measuring micro-expressions through 126 points on the face. If a number is bigger than one, it indicates a positive emotion, and if it is under, it indicates a lack of emotion or negative emotions. From my data set, it is noticeable that Hedonic brands have generated more positive emotions on average. This difference is highly noticeable when looking at the no-emoji condition, where hedonic happiness is 1.27 while utilitarian happiness is only 0.65. This also gives an exciting insight into the fact that the presence of emojis lowers the happiness of hedonic brands while increasing it for utilitarian brands.



Figure 6. Top 5 Happiness generating posts without emojis demonstrated through heatmaps

Source: Authors calculations



Figure 7. Top 5 Happiness generating posts with emojis demonstrated through heatmaps

Source: Authors calculations

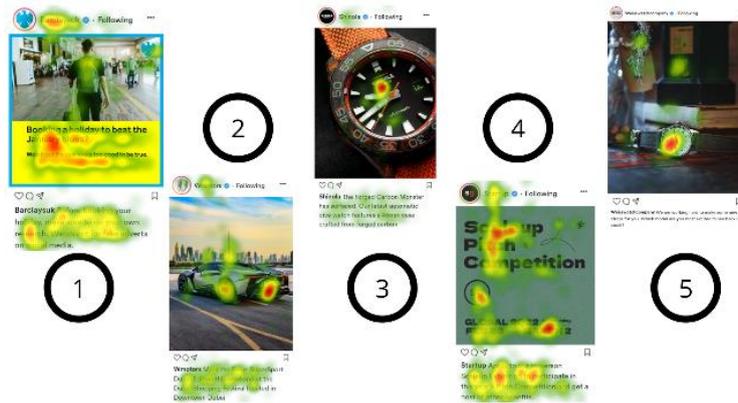


Figure 8. Bottom 5 Happiness generating posts without emojis demonstrated trough heatmaps

Source: Authors calculations



Figure 9. Bottom 5 Happiness generating posts with emojis demonstrated trough heatmaps

Source: Authors calculations

The figures from 6-9 represent both the worst and best emojis generators from the emojis and non-emoji conditions. It is also important to note that they are visualized through heatmaps. The most exciting aspect is that a top performer in the emoji condition can be a bottom performer in the non-emoji condition and vice versa. Overall the top is dominated by Hedonic and the bottom by utilitarian posts for no-emoji condition. However, the emoji condition for both bottom and top has mixed representation in terms of hedonic and utilitarian posts. From these posts, we can say that the presence of emojis does not change our inbuilt consumption patterns when it comes to social media. It just changes our emotions and viewing times but not viewing order.

There is a huge problem with these orders that might put the entire emotion tracking portion at risk. This is because the lab 22 post that got one of the worst reviews during the questionnaire but is a top performer for the non-emojis condition. This might indicate that the computer mixed up disapproving smiles and actual positive emotions. It might just be an

anomaly because, in the TFF part of the analysis, it was removed because of being a considerable outlier.

There were also some other noticeable overlaps between different types of posts that were not the goal of this study but are necessary to mention non the less. This data was gathered by analysing the heatmaps and gaze plots. The most attention was paid to faces, bodies, and text on the image. This aligns with the finding that most of our attention is focused on the image portion of the social media post. Everything else is a secondary factor that plays support. As mentioned in theory we are also constantly looking for more humanization, which aligns with the finding that we pay most attention to people.

At the very end of the study three questions were asked. The questions will not be analysed individually but as a group of findings. The discoveries from the questioner will be ordered in their importance to the study.

1. Nobody mentioned emojis in their discussion
2. The text and the image must be in harmony to create a pleasant experience
3. Images with only text on them had a universal negative feeling
4. Participants actively mentioned that they remembered the products/services they cared about
5. During the first two questions, individuals remembered mostly the positive posts, but when shown, all the posts started pointing out posts they did not like.
6. Brand names were only remembered when the individual had interacted with it before

Conclusion

The importance of an emoji comes from its ability to emphasize the already existing emotional feeling to create more cohesion. For this reason, it is vital to have correct emoji usage as a part of the social media plan because when poorly used, it will backfire and hurt the brand. From the beginning, this work was set out to find the interaction between brand type and emojis. The combination of empirical and theoretic research has given much-needed data to understand emojis at a more detailed level on Instagram.

From the theoretical part of this thesis, it was found that for the most effective usage of emojis some specific rules must be followed. It is essential to know that emojis should be placed in short to medium-sized sentences where they are in sentence breaks or next to words they are emphasizing. With the successful usage of these 3633 small emoticons, the desired feelings can be manifested while also speeding up reading time and comprehension of the text. The most critical part of emojis communication is accounting for cultural differences, platform differences, placement, and the culturally changed meaning of some emojis. If these

rules are followed correctly, emojis will have the power of lowering the feeling of intrusiveness of a new brand post in an individual's Instagram feed, creating the feeling of innovation while also increasing the interaction rate.

In the empirical part of the thesis, the effect of emojis presence on the brand type was focused on. This was done based on the hedonic and utilitarian scale with emotional and object-based emojis. There were 30 participants in the test whom all took it in the neuromarketing lab. Every participant was in their late teens or early twenties to show the most common emoji users. For each participant, we measured TFF, TFD, memory, and emotions, trying to get the most holistic view possible.

From the empirical part, some overarching patterns were not manipulated by either brand type or emoji presence that are worth mentioning. When a post appears on the screen, our eyes' focus pattern goes from image to brand header, then to text, and finally to emojis placed in the text. At the same time, the time spent taking in a piece of content is dependent on the information density, visual interest, and overall cohesion of every part of the Instagram post. This is important because if the image is not attractive or exciting enough, the consumer will not be able to reach the text which in our case wasn't a problem but can be one in real life situation. If this were the case all the effort of choosing the right emoji would be wasted. To increase the likelihood of a post having a memorable impact, they should contain people or people like figures, a small amount of text on images, and every piece of the Instagram post must communicate the same goal.

From the questioner we know that emojis are something that none of us consciously notice. However, pay a significant amount of attention, especially when it comes to emotions in hedonic and objects in utilitarian copy. From the perspective of the brand types, the presence of emoji types plays a significant role in reading speed, focus points, and emotions. It appears that emojis are tools to increase overall viewing times for hedonic brands even if they bring down the "happiness" of the post, being in sharp contrast to utilitarian brands where the emojis increase the "happiness" of the post while not affecting viewing time. Hedonic brands also manage to lengthen the reading times of the text, which I believe is related to longer emoji fixations even though the noticing speed difference between emojis is a lot faster compared to utilitarian posts. The weirdest and most unexplainable part of this thesis is the fact that emojis seem to have quite a huge effect on the TFF, TFD and emotions but since they are actively noticed so late into the process. It is hard to believe that a causal relationship exists. Therefore the researcher thinks that all the data might just be a huge coincidence or peripheral vision has a lot bigger effect on us than was expected.

As with most empirical work, there are always gaps left for further study. For this study, the biggest shortcoming would be the number of participants. Because for each aspect tested, the required number of participants goes up exponentially. On top of that, the weakest part of this empirical part is the emotion analysis because the results are inconsistent, meaning the researcher has a hard time believing that the presence of emojis can make the best performing post the worst performing one in the opposite condition. For further studies, I would recommend increasing the number of participants so different types of emojis can be tested. It is also important to note that since eye-tracking only manages to read fixations, but the emojis understanding already begins the parafovea vision, there might be some shortcomings which weren't accounted for.

Marketing agencies and in-house marketing teams can use this data to make educated decisions when creating their Instagram identity. With this information, they can guide their emoji choices to be in cohesion with their brand type to maximize their copies power.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A

Differences between hedonic and utilitarian brands

Situations	Hedonic over Utilitarian	Utilitarian over Hedonic	Equal
Elements of Brand Image	entertainment, escapism (Kim et al., 2019), servicescape (Alam et al., 2020; Dedeoglu et al., 2018) fun, expressiveness (Peters et al., 2007) satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Hartmann et al., 2011; Teresa Montaner & José-Miguel Pina, 2008)	Performance (Johar & Sirgy, 1991; J. L. Lee et al., 2014) Product benefits(Bairrada et al., 2018; Meenaghan, 1995; Moon et al., 2010) Knowledge, Functionality (Johar & Sirgy, 1991) Safety (Hsieh, 2002) Quality (Teresa Montaner & José-Miguel Pina, 2008)	
Brand Goals	Attachment(Diallo et al., 2021) leisure consumption (Peters et al., 2007) More resistant to recalls (Magno et al., 2017) brand affect/image (Ashfar Adams, 2016; Moon et al., 2012)	Trust(Ashfar Adams, 2016; Diallo et al., 2021) Magnification of prior knowledge (Johar & Sirgy, 1991) Noticeability (Riley et al., 2015) High Perceived Quality (Moon et al., 2012)	Purchase intention (Rima, 2019) satisfaction (Khalikussabir & Abdul Waris, 2021; S. Lee & Kim, 2018; Mehmood & Hanaysha, 2015) loyalty (Alam et al., 2020; Albayrak et al., 2020; Moon et al., 2012) Long term relationship (Halilovic, 2013; Huber et al., 2015)
Online Brand tools	online reviews (Chakraborty & Bhat, 2017, 2018) Gift promotion (Teresa Montaner & José-Miguel Pina, 2008) Animated graphs and pictures (Tsang & Tse, 2005)	Discounts (Teresa Montaner & José-Miguel Pina, 2008) Information (Martín-Consuegra et al., 2019) Owned media (Colicev et al., 2018)	Social media advertising/ sales content (Raji et al., 2019) user generated content (Raji Ridwan Adetunji et al., 2017; Rima, 2019) High involvement (Colicev et al.,

Social Media goals	credibility(Chakraborty & Bhat, 2018) purchase intention, awareness Brand Image(Raji et al., 2019) Experience (Martín-Consuegra et al., 2019) Higher interaction (Louisa Ha & Mohammad Abuljadail, 2019; Pöyry et al., 2013)	Higher Loyalty Cognitive engagement (Louisa Ha & Mohammad Abuljadail, 2019) High browsing (Pöyry et al., 2013) Higher change of shopping online (Overby & Lee, 2006)	2018) behavioural intention Goal orientation (Martín-Consuegra et al., 2019) Social capital (Louisa Ha & Mohammad Abuljadail, 2019)
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Source: compiled by the author

APPENDIX B
Test group one



APPENDIX C
Test Group two



Resümee

MILLINE MÕJU ON EMOJIDEL HEDONILISTE JA UTILITAARSETE INSTAGRAMMI POSTITUSTE EMOTSIOONIDEL JA TÄHELEPANULE

Glen-Gregory Lille

Emotikonide tähtsus sotsiaalmeedias põhineb nende võimekusel rõhutada eksisteerivaid emotsioone ja tõsta üldist teksti ühtsust. Loomulikult nagu iga tööriist on tegemist kahepoolse mõõgaga. Tuleb rõhutada, et ebaefektiivne kasutamine loob vastupidise olukorra. Selle töö eesmärgiks on välja nuputada kuidas emotikonid mõjutavad posituse vaataja: fookuspunkte, fookuste pikkust, emotsioone ja võimet mäletada postitusi.

Bakalaureuse töö teoreetiline osa raames selgus, et emotikonid peaksid paiknema keskmise-lühema poolsetes lausetes. Ning nende asukoht peaks olema sõltuv komadest ja punktidest või nad peaksid paiknema sõnade kõrval, mida nad illustreerivad. Korrektsel kasutuse korral võimaldavad emotikonid vähendada postituste pealetükkivust inimeste Instagrammi voos, loovad innovatsiooni illusiooni ja tõstavad interaktiivsuse protsenti.

Bakalaureuse töö empiiriline pool keskendus emotsioonide ja objekti põhiste emotikonidele ning nende võimekusele mõjutada Hedoonilisi ja Utilitaarseid brände. Selle eesmärgi saavutamiseks testiti kahekümne erineva brändi positusi kolmekümne indiviidi peal. Testid viidi läbi Delta maja neuroturundus laboris. Testi käigus jälgis pilgujälgimise masin pilkude fookuspunkte, nende pikkust, seonduvaid emotsioone ja mälu.

Testimise jooksul selgusid parameetrid, mis polnud mõjutatud ei brändi tüübist, kui ka emotikonide olemasolust. Üheks suurimaks oli see, kuidas inimese pilk liikus ekraani. Alati alustati visuaalist, kust liiguti edasi üleval asuva brändi nime ja logo juurest ning alles siis pörgati alla teksti sisse kus asusid emotikonid. Vaatamise pikkustest ja eelnevalt mainitud järjekorrast teeb uurija oletuse, et inimese pilk sõltub informatsiooni tihedusest, visuaali huvitavusest ja üldisest harmooniast kõikide postituste elementide vahel. Siit selgus ka muster, et päris elus, kus posituste vahel vahetamine toimub palju suurema kiirusega jäävad enamused ajast tekstid ja brändi nimed ning logod nägematta.

Küsimustikuga õnnestus märgata, et teadlikult ei märka keegi emotikone, kuid alateadlikult pöörame me neile märgatava koguse oma tähelepanust. Seda on võimalik hästi tugevalt märgata kui võrrelda emotsionaalsete emotikonide olemasolu hedooniliste ja utilitaarsete brändide vahel. Brändi tüüpide perspektiivist mõjutab emotikonide olemasolu lugemiskiirust, fookuspunkte ja emotsioone. Emotsionaalsed emotikonid tunduvad olevat efektiivne tööriist, et tõsta fookuse aega hedoonilistel brändidel isegi, kui nad toovad kaasa "õnne" languse. Tegemist on tugeva kontrastiga utilitaarsetele brändidele, kus emotikonid

tõstavad “õnne” kuid ei oma märgatavat efekti postituse vaatamise pikkusel. Hedooniliste brändide puhul on tugevalt tunda ka lugemis aegade pikenemist, mis tulenevad pikemast emotikonide vaatamise ajast isegi kui kahe emotikoni vaheline märkamise aeg on kiirem kui utilitaarsetel brändidel. Selle teadustöö suurimaks müsteeriumiks jääb teadmine, et emotikonide olemus mõjutab märgatavalt inimeste fookuspunkte, nende pikkusi ja emotsioone, isegi siis kui esimene fookuspunkt langeb neile kaks sekundit enne järgmisele postitusele liikumist. See tähendab kas me märkame emotikone enne, kui nad jõuavad meie fookusvälja või on kogu kogutud informatsioon lihtsalt üks suur kokkusattumus.

Nagu kõikide empiiriliste töödega jääb palju tühimikke mida saaks täita jätku uuringutega. Selle uuringu üheks suurimaks nõrkuseks oli osalejate puudus. See tuleneb reaalsusest, et iga testitava elemendiga peab kasvama osalejate kogus. Sammuti peab uurija nõrgaks ka emotsioonide analüüsi, sest brändi Lab22 postitus mille kohta jagati universaalselt negatiivset tagasisidet pälvis top 5 positsiooni ilma emotikonita olukorras.

Seda uuringut saavad kasutada nii turundus agentuurid, kui ka maja sisesed reklaami meeskonnad, et kujundada enda sotsiaalmeedia strateegiat.

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