

# A Brief Perspective on Emoji Marketing

Selay Ilgaz Sümer

**Abstract**— Marketing has an important place in the success of the businesses. In fact, effective customer communication is the primary aim of the marketing activities. Building a better bridge between the businesses and consumers is very important in order to survive. For this reason, firms have been searching the ways of sending their messages to the target markets in a better manner. In recent years, businesses have started to communicate with their customers in a different way. Businesses use emojis in their marketing activities. In spite of these efforts, in recent years, a new concept “emoji marketing” has emerged. After that emoji marketing is started to be an important research topic for authors. In this study, it is aimed to present a brief perspective on emoji marketing. In this context, online databases such as Sage, Science Direct (Elsevier) and Taylor & Francis were considered in examining this new marketing trend.

**Index Terms**—Communication, digital marketing, emoji marketing, technology.

## I. INTRODUCTION

One of the ways of being successful in a competitive environment is depending on planning the marketing activities of the businesses carefully. The firms which introduce and explain their goods and services in a more efficient way could succeed in an intense competitive environment. In short, communicating with the consumers in a better and effective way has a vital importance. In today’s world along with the technological developments, building bridges with consumers have also changed. Especially with digital marketing, businesses have created digital marketing strategies and interacted with target markets in digital platforms. Recently, digital marketing trend which is called emoji marketing has emerged. Along with emoji marketing, emojis are started to be used in sending the marketing messages to the consumers. Thus, a new way of marketing has appeared and adopted by the firms. In this study, a brief perspective on emoji marketing has been given by utilizing the online databases such as Sage, Science Direct (Elsevier) and Taylor & Francis. For this purpose, “emoji marketing” was used as a keyword in searching the related databases and only relevant, full access articles were taken into consideration. It is thought that the study will present brief perspective on emoji marketing literature to the researchers and shed light to the new studies who are interested in this subject. In this context, firstly emojis and emoji marketing are introduced. In the following section, a brief literature on emoji marketing is given based on Sage, Science Direct (Elsevier) and Taylor & Francis. In the last section conclusion is presented.

Selay Ilgaz Sümer, Department of Management, Baskent University, Ankara, Turkey

## II. EMOJIS AND EMOJI MARKETING

Emojis are the symbolic ways of the communication. Briefly, emojis can be defined as “images you can incorporate into text, e-mail, Twitter, Facebook and chat applications to convey a message or an emotion” [1]. Some of the characteristics of emojis can be listed as below [2]:

- They have high visuality.
- They are the shortest and colorful way of communication.
- Emojis include smileys, food icons, objects, symbols etc.
- Since they are colorful, they can attract the attention of people easily.

With contributions of Jeremy Burge who is the founder of Emojipedia; July 17, 2014 has started to be celebrated as “World Emoji Day”. On July, 2017 which is the fourth anniversary day of “World Emoji Day” some of the statistics were declared. These statistics are as follows [3]:

- On Twitter, Face With Tears of Joy was the most used emoji.
- By mid-2015 on Instagram, half of the comments were expressed by using emojis.
- Daily on Facebook Messenger, 5 billion emojis were sent among users.

Emojis were started to be used among Japan cellphone users in 1999 to communicate with each other. Emojis are the ways of explaining users’ thoughts and feelings shortly, instead of using many but also limited text messages. For this reason, among mobile operators a big competition has started to satisfy the new communication need of the users [4]. In Fig. 1, most widely used emojis are illustrated.

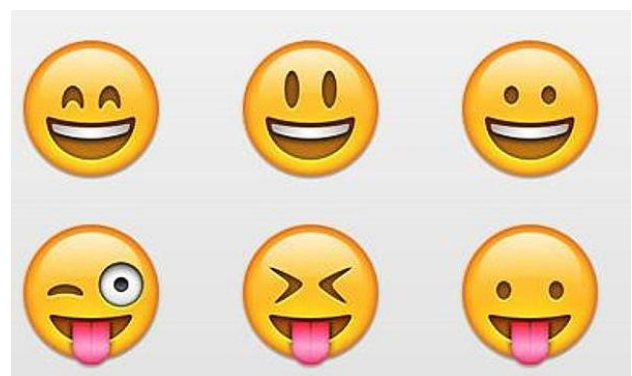


Figure 1: Most widely used emojis [5]

By using emojis in marketing efforts, a new marketing concept has emerged and started to be adopted. This new concept is called emoji marketing. Actually, emoji marketing is the shortest way of sharing thoughts and messages between firms and consumers. Domino’s Pizza is one of the businesses using emoji marketing. They offer convenience to their customers in pizza orders by the use of pizza emojis.

Hereby, emojis enable to give orders in a short time and simplifying the purchasing process. McDonalds, Coca-Cola, and Pepsi are some of the businesses utilizing emojis and emoji marketing [6], [7]. In many marketing campaigns such as CNN, Ikea, and Chevrolet; emojis have started to be preferred to capture the attention of target markets [2].

### III. A BRIEF LITERATURE ON EMOJI MARKETING

As denoted before, three databases were taken into consideration in the literature review. Examined articles were selected according to the relevance. Also full access articles were taken into consideration.

Laestadius and Wahl (2017) made a study on corporate hashtag campaigns as a public health concern. At the end of this work it was stated that social media users are found to be the positive advertisers of harmful products [8].

Oleszkiewicz, Karwowski, Pisanski, Sorokowski, Sobrado and Sorokowska (2017) examined the usage of emoticons among Facebook users. It was found that emoticons have an important role in profiling the user's demographic characteristics such as age and gender. On the other hand, the same situation is not always valid for psychological traits of the Facebook users [9].

Jaeger and Ares (2017) conducted a research among Chinese consumers on dominant meanings of facial emoji [10].

Lin, Swarna and Bruning (2017) made a study on brand post popularity. In the study, they stated that in some of the cultures graphical non-verbal communication has an important role [11].

Jaeger, Vidal, Kam and Ares (2017) tried to answer the question of "Can emoji be used as a direct method to measure emotional associations to food names?" American and Chinese consumers were used for the study [12].

Luangrath, Peck and Barger (2017) examined the use of textual paralanguage. In the study it was referred that textual paralanguage must be taken into consideration by marketing decision makers [13].

Holmberg, Chaplin, Hillman and Berg (2016) conducted a study on the presentation of food in social media. It was stated that personal shared images are more impressive than the advertisements made by the businesses [14].

Wang, Pauleen and Zhang (2016) examined the affects of social media applications on B2B communication. It was referred that symbol sets such as emojis are so useful in some cases [15].

Vidal, Ares and Jaeger (2016) made a research about food related emotional expressions. It was found that in terms of food context, emojis and emoticons are suitable tools in expressing feelings [16].

Taecharunroj (2016) examined the marketing communications strategy of Starbucks on Twitter. At the end of the study, the author presented various practical implications [17].

Gao (2016) made a study on the usage of social media in non-profit foundations. A content analysis was carried out in order to determine the tendency of non-profit foundations social media usage in China. At the end of the study, important practical applications were presented [18].

### IV. CONCLUSION

It is the truth that the existence of businesses is highly related with their adaptability to the environment. As long as they track the changes in the environment, it will be easy to struggle with their competitors. At this point, following the new trends is very important. This situation is valid for all functions of businesses. As marketing is one of the functions of the businesses, marketing managers have to be more alert to the new marketing techniques.

In today's world technology takes place in the heart of the business activities. Along with the digital marketing activities, digital marketing trend which is called "emoji marketing" has emerged. Emoji marketing is the new marketing concept in recent years. Indeed, it is the new communication way of the businesses with their consumers. Since emoji marketing enables to communicate easily with target markets, many businesses have to utilize emoji marketing.

Colorful and highly visualized emojis bring businesses and their customers more closely. Along with the emojis, it is started to be easier and faster to understand the emotions of the customers. Thus, both parties have started to speak the same and universal language.

By the help of the emojis, attracting consumers' attention to the businesses goods and services could be easier. Besides that it becomes easy to persuade people to be involved in marketing campaigns of the firms. It is the fact that both consumers and businesses will gain a lot from this new digital marketing trend.

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**Dr. Selay Iğaz Sümer** received her PhD in Business Administration in 2011. Her primary research interests are marketing strategies, consumer behavior and international marketing.