

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the perception of emoji usage in WhatsApp text message communication between Generation X and Generation Z. The background of this research stems from the increasing use of emojis as visual symbols in digital communication, which often leads to different interpretations across generations. This research employed a descriptive quantitative approach using an online questionnaire survey. Respondents consisted of 96 individuals from WhatsApp work groups, representing two age groups: Generation X (1965–1980) and Generation Z (1995–2011). The results show a significant difference in both the perception and frequency of emoji usage between the two generations. Generation X tends to interpret emojis literally and uses them more cautiously, especially in formal contexts. In contrast, Generation Z is more expressive and flexible, often assigning contextual or even sarcastic meanings to emojis. These findings support the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model and the cognitive effects theory, which suggest that communication perception is strongly influenced by generational experiences and digital culture. This study contributes valuable insight into intergenerational communication dynamics within digital workplace environments.

Keywords: *Emoji, Generation X, Generation Z, WhatsApp, Perception, Digital Communication*