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Employment of Emoji in social awareness advertising campaigns

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Abstract:

The emoticons “the emoji” are considered a form of visual, non-verbal communication that emerged recently with the development of online communications and social media apps. Emojis are small shapes and icons that express feelings that are transmitted and circulated faster than writing. They are the closest description of the person’s emotional state and mood, and they have also evolved to include animal shapes, tools, country flags, and others. Emojis have become of great communication importance, especially for the contemporary generation, which prompted advertising brands, interested in keeping pace with the modern age in communicating with the audiences, as an innovative method that includes fun, entertainment and persuasion in the context of the technological, communication and expressive changes of the era, especially since consumers are exposed to many advertisements every day, so it takes more effort to attract attention. This research discussing about these emojis, their definition, their history, how to employ them in the field of advertising for many brands, and the possibility of using them in community awareness campaigns, especially on social media. The methodology based on a theoretical study and then analysis of several models of Egyptian awareness campaigns, and conducting practical experience using the emoji as a new innovative idea for the same campaign and measures its effectiveness. The research found that emojis include a great deal of simple, innovative and modern, which contributes to its effectiveness and gives a modern impression about the advertiser or the brand. The use of emoji in societal issues also provides a lot of phrases, tips and instructions with familiar symbols that contribute to delivering the message in a modern, innovative and fast way.

Keywords:

Emoji, advertising campaigns, social awareness, social media

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Introduction:

A technological development have greatly affected human life and communication patterns, as the development of communication technology has facilitated many communication tasks for humans and allows all ages to communicate through different media by smart phones, tablets and through various social media applications. Emoji now is an effective visual means of expressing feelings to support the non-verbal communication that is not restricted by a certain language to accurately express the person’s thinking or feeling. Many brands sought to use these symbols in various forms of communication with the audience in communicating with them on the social media pages, due to its updates, innovation and modernity, in addition to the spirit and emotion that these symbols added to different conversations to clarify and show the feelings behind the words and then a new communication language that expresses the advertising ideas and messages in an atypical way.

Significance:

1. Identifying emojis and their history.
2. Discussing the possibility of applying emojis in advertising especially social awareness advertising, and the ability for persuading the audience.
3. Discussing the problem of emojis effect on language as a recent non verbal communication tool which can shorten a lot of words and sentences in the communication process.

Hypotheses:

- The emoji is an effective innovative visual communication element that increases the fun and interaction of socail awareness advertisements.
- The emoji achieves an emotional dimension of socail awareness advertisements
- The emoji achieves persuasion with the lest words and phrases of socail awareness advertisements to create a useful behavioral.

Objective:

This is to study the importance of using emoji in the advertising communication process, and the possibility of using them in raising awareness campaigns as a new innovative advertising tool in social media.

Methodology:

The study is based on analytical study of several examples of Egyptian awareness campaigns (female circumcision campaign and the campaign of, Be the secret of your strength). It is also based on carrying out practical experiment using emoji style as a new innovative way for the same campaign. As well as measuring the campaign effectiveness through a questionnaire for various audience in order to know the effectiveness, understanding of the advertising message, the audience interaction, also the importance and authenticity of the campaigns using the emoji in societal issues.

Theoretical Framework

Emojis History:

An emoji is an expression originating from the Japanese set of words: (絵文字) that refer to the word “picture”, while “e” and “moji” are often traced back to the word “emoticon”, which is a combination of two English words: “emotion” and

“icon”, (Tomic et al. 2013). The origin of this expression dates back to the beginning of the use of cellular phones by Japanese company NTT DoCoMo in 1999 (Goldsborough, 2015), specifically in one of the telecommunications companies, with the aim of facilitating and improving communication between employees as images and small graphics initially designed for a single platform between them, until such time as these little emoticons quickly spread among Japanese mobile device users as a means of expressing emotions in texts and other digital messages. With the spread of the idea of emoji and the difference in the phone industry from different countries and cultures, there was a difference in the composition and visual design of those symbols. The idea of emoji quickly evolved from a digital keyboard-based form to a set of highly expressive visual symbols that have the ability to cross barriers of written and spoken language (Angula, 2016).

In 2007, the emoticons published by the Unicode Consortium became a popular symbolic language among users, and were classified as “emoji” after excluding punctuation symbols; they turned into emoji on the screen. (TORUN, Nur: 2019)



Fig.1 emoji (Facebook app. updates with emoticons.)

http://www.coolebaytools.com/tips/add-mood-to-facebook-updates-with-emoticons#.YG_KmN1IDIU

In early 2010; emojis penetrated the texts of words, but went beyond the topic to express the tone of voice and body language, which cannot be transmitted through words in digital communication.

In 2015, Apple introduced emoji on its keyboard. In the same year, Oxford Dictionaries included emoji as a word and defined them as ‘**small digital pictures or icons used to express an idea, emotion, or feeling in electronic communication**’ (Goldsborough 2015).

These emojis were used in emails through various applications and social network sites, such as

(WhatsApp & Messenger, Snapchat) as well as email applications (Outlook & Gmail). Hence, emojis began to take an international form and have become an important component of nonverbal communication as a substitute for facial expressions and body language (Goldsborough, 2015), then different companies started creating their own emojis, incorporating them into their marketing communications (Vangelov, 2017) and replacing famous short words in messages through social network sites with emoji. Thus, there is a wide scope for expressing thoughts and emotions with visual and concise symbols that widely reach

the extent of societal agreement. That Emoji do not only include yellow facial expressions but also represent items, places and many other things and

activities such as plants, animals, foods, countries, etc.



Fig.2 emoji Strings (Alldred, 2014)

Emoji's Characteristics:

- 1- "Flexibility of meaning" is a big part of the appeal of emojis, as they have two advantages over alphabetic words: They are based on visual cues that have a better chance of being interpreted consistently across cultures, and they add phonetic expressions and moods to the message text (Sternbergh, 2014).
- 2- They have the ability to create a broader understanding between different cultures (Alshenqeeti, 2016). For example, facial expressions are a universal emotion, and are not learned differently in every culture, as all humans are anatomically similar and use their muscles similarly to express feelings of joy or sadness and so on (Mesquita et al 1997).
- 3- It is an alternative tool for non-verbal cues (Kaye et al. 2016), which reinforces the true meaning or emotional intent of the message, which contributes to strengthening its effect (D. Derks, et al. 2008).

Emoji and Language:

Humans always need to communicate with each other to convey their feelings and emotions in the intended sense. Throughout history, they used images or symbols to achieve this and create visual links with each other (Coulmas F, 2003). Language responds and changes according to social changes and situations, and its forms and uses evolve according to the needs of users and the ways and methods that enable them to communicate. At the beginning of the emergence of portable communication devices, the matter raised the concerns of the traditional and conservative current on social and human communication in terms of language. The language has become succinct and many vital communication signals, especially non-verbal cues, are missing (Tayebenik and Puteh, 2012).

However, there was another opinion that believed that language often comes from the

use of forms and expressions, including the use of emojis and the best evidence of the "hieroglyphic" or ancient Egyptian language. Therefore, the transition from the written language to the symbolic alternative that represents situations from human life is a natural development, especially in the virtual world that the world is experiencing and what technology has achieved in the means of communication.

Emoji is a new form of language and is the fastest growing and evolving form of technology, especially since its users are the contemporary generation, who are the most, exposed to contemporary digital technology since its inception and the most users of it. Therefore, it has become a new language of communication among young people and users of electronic applications that are exchanged hundreds of times a day.

Moreover, communication platforms also contribute to their spread and flexibility of use for the public by creating certain symbols for religious situations or occasions or congratulations that reduce a lot of phrases and give the interaction a fast, modern form (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3 (twitters ramdan emoji)

<https://twitter.com/thebilawal/status/1124944998858932224>

With increasing methods of internet

communication, emoji become part of social life, even they have been used in political life and electoral campaigns (Fig. 4, 5).

Therefore, emoji have become a contemporary



Figure No. 4: The use of emojis in political life in communicating with the digital audience through social media platforms

<https://www.capstan.be/on-how-emoji-are-increasingly-making-their-way-into-political-communication>

communicative reality that cannot dispense with verbal expressions, but they provide a lot of explanation, expression and time and give the required meaning in the technological age.



Figure 5: Hillary Clinton used the emoji in a survey with the digital audience through her official page on Twitter

Emojis in Digital Advertising:

Neuromarketing scientists see visual symbols as a tool that works better with the cognitive and perception processes of the audience than words, where images or visual symbols are processed in the area that reacts to the feelings of the audience, while word processing on the other hand is done in the area that deals with logic.

And words take long time to interpret and sometimes leave no trace. As for visual images, they interfere quickly and leave a mental and emotional impact, so visual images or symbols are more effective in influencing the emotions of individuals. They convey the desired message, intended meaning and emotional intent faster than words. Hence, marketers realized the importance of short visual expression in the rapid digital age and how to get a quick and effective response to the audience. Companies and brands realized the added value of visual expressions within

advertising and began to use emojis in digital campaigns as a modern and simple innovative communication method (Gülcan Şener & G. Motif Atar,).

Emojis also enabled companies to create more attractive messages that have also helped to communicate with audience in a fun, innovative and emotional way. Brands such as Pepsi, McDonald's, Ikea, Burger King designed their own expressive emoji as a kind of promotion and to preserve their communication entity represented in the brand and its modernity and keeping pace with the Emoji trend (Aleesha Ann, Dr. P. E. Thomas, 2018) (Fig.6&7). These symbols are also used in advertising communications and economic activities. For example, Domino's Pizza created a new service through which customers can order pizza by sharing the pizza code in the company's account on social media pages (Fig.9) (Huang et al. 2008).



Fig.6 Dominos pizza own emoji in social media adv. (<https://twitter.com/dominos>)



Fig.7 Pepsimoji (<https://www.copyright-licensing.com/pepsico-announced-as-twitter-launch-partner-for-promoted-stickers/>)

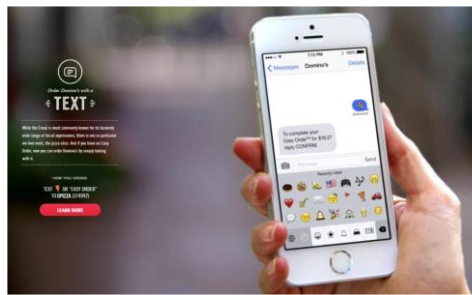


Fig8 A new way from Domino's Pizza to use emojis, that consumers can order pizza by text message using Domion's emoji (<https://anyware.dominos.com/>)

Symbolic communication through the use of emoji contributes to a new innovative idea of advertising in terms of shortening the advertising phrases, and making them illustrated rather than written, in addition to the emotional and symbolic character in conveying the message and convincing the audience in a contemporary style

that keeps pace with technology and modern communications. So Using emoji in advertising campaigns increases the persuasiveness of the message, which helps companies achieve their marketing goals more efficiently (Yakin & Eru 2017).

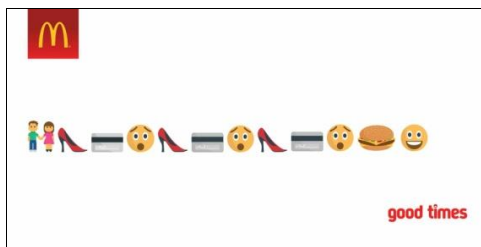


Fig 9,10&11 macdonalds using emoji in ads campaign connecting traditional and digital advertising campaign. (https://www.adsoftheworld.com/media/print/mcdonalds_good_times_5)

To confirm the spread of emoji and interest in it as a modern means of expression and relying on it in this way in contemporary digital communication, there is now a “World Emoji Day” celebration, in which companies compete in providing innovative advertising content related to emojis and employing them with different advertising ideas that are consistent with the goals of the brand as it expresses its mission, products or goals and competitions that motivate the audience to form a meaning or phrase from the emoji in the

advertisement.(Fig 12,13,14)

And also various formal institutions and organizations participated in it, using these symbols as a global communication language to clarify their message globally without being restricted to any language. This confirms that these symbols have become an “unofficial” global language circulated by social media users, and have even become a mainstay in digital communications.

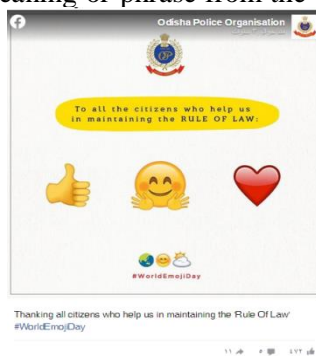


Fig 12,13,14 samples of emoji's advertising on social media pages

Emoji's functions in digital advertising are:

- 1- Enhancing emotional expression: where the conveyed feelings are depicted in the message

in order to build emotional and enjoyable relationships or seek to preserve them.

- 2- Enhancing aesthetic expression: by carefully



inserting emojis in the appropriate places in the appropriate manner, it adds an aesthetic value to the advertisement in an attractive form.

- 3- Increasing audience participation.
- 4- Increasing awareness of a particular issue.
- 5- Modernity and being contemporary with the age.
- 6- Shortening the large number of advertising phrases in the form of emoji.
- 7- Reducing confusion in the communication process

With the increase in the use of emoji recently, brands should pay attention to the fact that although emojis are primarily used to communicate emotions, there are some differences in the interpretation of some emojis because of the differences between cultures, customs, traditions and beliefs among peoples. There are also several differences in the innovative design of emoji between different applications or platforms or the programming language of phones (e.g. Android, iOS), even if they are similar in the formal structure of the icon, which calls for advertising designers to be careful to avoid confusion of meaning or difference in meaning.

Types of emoji:

According to many studies, there are three types of emoji used in advertising:

- 1- **“Unicode emoji”**: It is a non-profit organization, has a set of unified symbols and is available in all programs, which take into account several criteria in the design of these symbols, the most important of which is the social importance of the symbol so that it contributes to the representation of many cultures and religions in the world, including facial signs with different skin colors. (Christa Dürscheid, 2007.)
- 2- **“Customemojis”**: These are usually developed by brands that are available to users as stickers.
- 3- **“Stickers”**: They serve as images sent in a marketing message and usually do not include

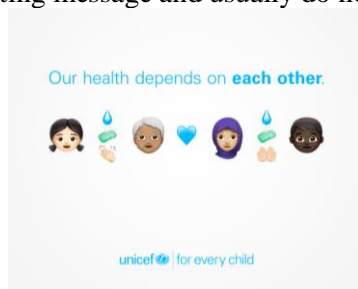


Fig15 unicef ad for children
<https://blog.emojipedia.org/one-year-on-bored-of-the-pandemic>

any alphabetic characters.

Emojis and Societal Awareness Advertising:

The symbolic connection created by emojis contributed to the development of a new language in marketing and advertising and the abbreviation of many words and phrases. More importantly, they gave way to greater creativity in conveying the message and convincing the audience with modern symbols and images, as well as extending to public service advertising and societal awareness advertising campaign, which aim to create societal awareness to create a useful behavioral pattern in the community.

Many companies, including non-profit organizations, started the use of emoji in their advertising campaigns. This was clearly demonstrated in its use in health awareness during the Corona virus crisis (COVID19). Many health stickers included emojis related to medical masks and emojis related to the disease.

At first, they spread on social media in conversations of the public, using the shape of a face mask and symbols expressing injury or urging the importance of distancing, until they were used as educational methods in a different innovative way that alleviated the severity and dread of the emerging epidemic, to the extent that some medical sectors and hospitals used emojis in their internal posters to educate the public about the procedures followed and the instructions required to prevent the virus (Nasim Lotfinejad ,et 2020) . Electronic communication specialists also noticed an increase in the use of health-related emojis when talking about Covid-19 on social media platforms, as face mask symbols and microbe emoji are commonly used to describe it.

Due to the effectiveness of the emoji, and due the nature and motivation of the audience, Twitter changed the symbol of the medical needle and modified it by removing blood drops from it in conjunction with educating the public about the importance of Covid-19 vaccine, and encouraging the social media public to vaccinate in a serious semantic sense expressing that the needle is protection and safety.

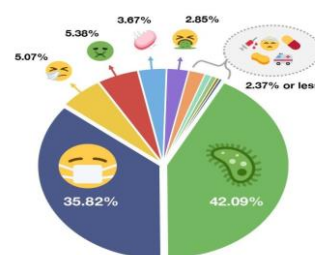


Fig16 analysis of the following emojis finds tweets
<https://twitter.com/Emojipedia/status/1237699839321870338/photo/1>

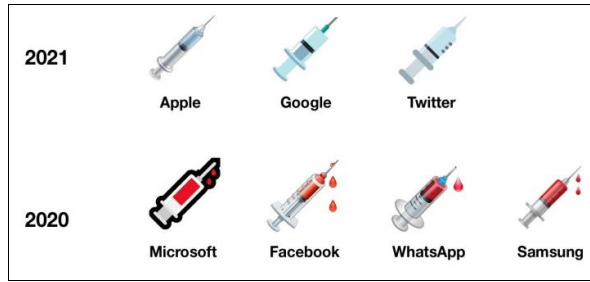


Fig 17 Twitter updates syringe emoji

<https://blog.emojipedia.org/twitter-updates-syringe-emoji>

Applied Framework:

In view of the effective role of emoji in commercial and marketing advertisements, a pilot model was conducted on benefiting from the use of emoji in societal awareness campaigns through social networks to know the extent of their effectiveness and what they achieve from the emotional dimension of the advertising message.

1- Advertising campaigns affiliated to the **National Council for Women** were selected:

- **The first model:** is the “**Protect Her from Circumcision**” campaign: which is a campaign directed at fathers and mothers against female circumcision, in which the applied designs are presented using the symbolic emoji elements as a result of that circumcision on the woman's shock after her marriage and being aware of the damages of this matter, but it was too late.
- **The second model:** is the “**Your Life is Stations**” campaign, which is a campaign directed at women and men and works to motivate women to be ambitious producers that preserve their health, society and family with messages about the strength of her will to achieve her goals and not to pay attention to the restrictions of society and old habits. This campaign was mainly outdoors and in subway stations and it was integrated on

social media pages to increase its effectiveness and impact, and also for connecting traditional and digital campaigns as a modern trend at advertising.

- 2- Ideas based on the use of emoji elements that are easy to identify and interpret their significance and meaning among the Egyptian audiences, using the emojis of **WhatsApp** and **Apple operating system**.
- 3- Using an online survey which designed on the **google form application** and sent with practical experiences to a diverse group of age and types of digital audience. Its main objective is to identify the audience's reaction to the use of emoji in campaigns for societal issues and its ability to deliver the advertising message in a simplified different way in the language of the digital audience.
- 4- The Questionnaire form was presented to specialists and academic in the field of advertising to ensure the impartiality of the questions.
- 5- The Questionnaire forms send within two languages (Arabic – English) to be suitable for different digital Egyptian audiences.
- 6- The second model was a path to connect digital and traditional advertising using emojis.

Table1 the **Questionnaire Form**

<p>Questionnaire Form Employment of Emoji in social awareness advertising campaigns</p> <p>Emoticons, known as emojis, are small shapes and icons that express feelings or emotional intent are transmitted and circulated more quickly than writing in electronic messages. They evolved to include the forms of plants, animals, tools, countries and other symbols that are used as a symbolic alternative that expresses a message or a complete sentence without words. Emojis entered the field of advertising, especially with digital ads and on social networks to confirm the extent of involvement of these symbols among society as a new innovative communication method. The</p>	<p>- Do you prefer to use emoji to communicate with brands? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes</p> <p>- What's your impression about brands using emoji to communicate with audiences? <input type="checkbox"/> Trendy <input type="checkbox"/> Enjoyable <input type="checkbox"/> Innovative <input type="checkbox"/> Invaluable <input type="checkbox"/> Unstable</p> <p>Second: Questions Related to the Advertising Campaign:</p> <p>- Are the emoji elements used appropriate to the topic? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Maybe</p>
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research discusses their effectiveness in awareness advertisements on its social networks and their ability to achieve persuasion with visual pleasure in conveying the message.

****The questionnaire is treated confidentially for the purpose of scientific research and not used for other purposes.**

First: General Questions:

- Age: 18:30 31:50 51+
- Gender: Male Female
- Your relation to the advertising field;
 - Academic designer Audience
- Do you use the emoji in social media?
 - Yes No Sometimes
- Have you noticed the use of emoji in advertisements on social media sites?
 - Yes No Sometimes
- Does the emoji achieve the abbreviation for many phrases and sentences in the advertisement?
 - Yes No Sometimes

- Were you affected by the advertising message using the emoji?
 - Yes No Maybe
- Is the idea clear using the emoji?
 - Yes No Maybe
- Is the use of emoji appropriate for the subject of the advertisement?
 - Yes No Maybe
- Is the use of emoji appropriate for the advertiser?
 - Yes No Maybe
- What does an emoji do for you in advertising?
 - Credibility
 - Persuasion
 - Pleasure and fun
 - attracting attention
 - Other

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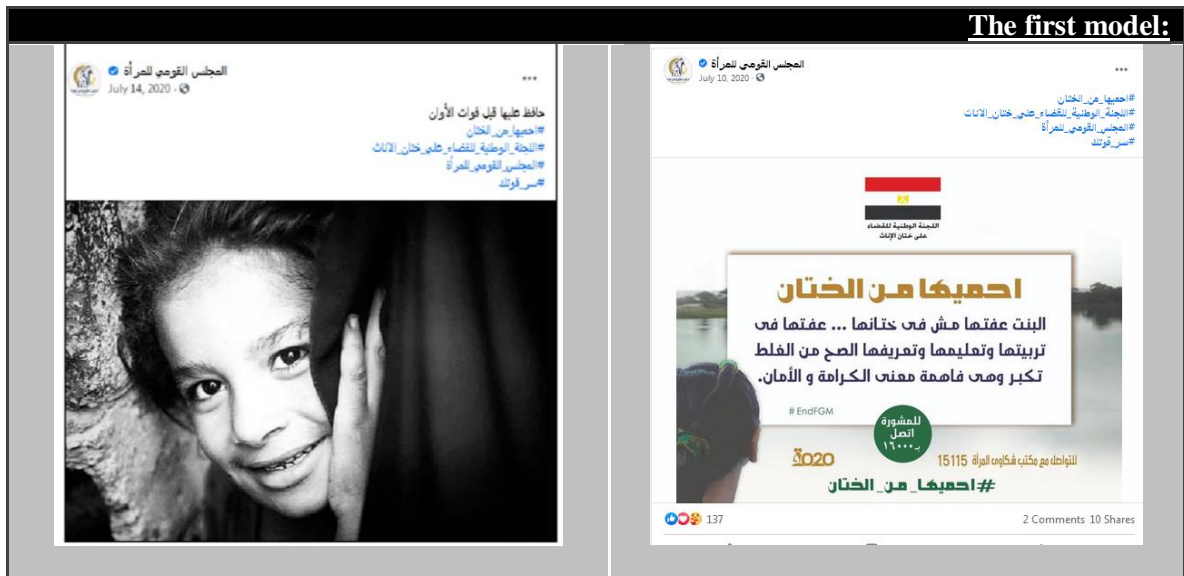


Fig. 18,19 Samples of formal ads campaign form formal facebook page



Suggestion 1

Suggestion2

حياتك محطات "Your Life is Stations" campaign

Fig. 20,21,22,23 Samples of formal ads “Your Life is Stations” campaign

Suggestion 3

Suggestion 4

Suggestion 5

Suggestion 6

Table2 analysis samples ads and applied advertising

Gender		AGE		Relationship in the field of advertising	
Male	28	18-30	23	Academic	20
Female	45	31-50	37	designer	23
		51+	13	Audience	30

Table3 participant's age , gender and job

Emoji usage and impression	Value
Using emoji	90.4
Ads emoji noticed	89%
brand emoji connecting	83,6%
Emoji abbreviation	89%
<input type="checkbox"/> Trendy	54,4%
<input type="checkbox"/> Enjoyable	28.8%
<input type="checkbox"/> Innovative	13,7%
<input type="checkbox"/> Invaluable	2%
<input type="checkbox"/> Unstable	1%

Table4 participants and emoji ads

Attitudes	Suggestion1	Suggestion2	Suggestion3	Suggestion4	Suggestion5	Suggestion6
Effective	89%	97,3%	95,9%	90,4%	90,4%	84,6%
appropriate of topic	87,7%	89%	90,45	89%	86,3%	84,9%
Clear idea	84,9%	90,4%	86,3%	90,4%	86,3%	83,6%
appropriate of subject	80,8%	90,4%	79,5%	86,3%	84,9%	78,1%
appropriate of advertiser	88,3%	87%	91,8%	87,7%	82,2%	87,7%
Credibility	19,2%	31%	19,2%	27,4%	20,5%	21,9%
Persuasion	35,6%	22,9%	35,6%	31,5%	20,5	16,4%
Pleasure and fun	28,8	27,4%	24,7%	16,4%	27,4%	32,9%
attracting attention	5,5%	15,1%	12,3%	19,2%	19,2%	16,4%
Other	11%	4,1%	8,2%	5,6%	12,3%	12,3%

Table 5 participant's answers about the suggestions designs by percentage

According to the survey results,

- The number of participants in the questionnaire was 73 of different ages .
- The participants expressed that they prefer to use emoji to communicate with brands by 83.6%.
- The participants expressed that the use of emojis in advertising campaigns is trendy by 53% , enjoyable 29% and innovative by 14% so brands which use emoji in their communication can have modern ,fashionable and enjoyable image.
- The participants also expressed that the use of emoji achieve the abbreviation for many phrases and sentences in the advertisement by 89%. So it will be beneficial for advertiser to add emoji to their social awareness campaign

messages it will save more time to understanding or explaining.

- Most participants expressed that the idea is effective, clear and suitable for subject and advertiser.
- There are differences in participants' impressions about the use of emoji, although positive. However, employing emoji into a societal awareness campaign strategy has its benefits, but it also has its challenges.

Findings:

- Emojis enjoy a great deal of simplicity, innovation and modernity, which contributes to their effectiveness and gives a modern impression about the advertiser or the brand.
- Emojis humanize advertising

communications and allow businesses to engage emotionally with consumers.

- The use of emoji in societal issues provides a lot of phrases, tips and instructions with familiar symbols that contribute to the rapid delivery of the message.
- The use of emoji in general for brands contributes to improving customer retention by providing fast and modern expression, especially through social media. As for societal issues, emojis give them the character of modernity to increase their persuasive effectiveness.

Recommendations:

- The study recommends the importance of taking advantage of emojis and focusing on them in future research in various advertising campaigns, as this study focused only on awareness and societal advertisements for Egyptian campaigns and on social networks.
- Expanding the use of emoji in various fields, such as education and health, because of their public acceptance and effectiveness.
- To ensure the success of the advertising communication process, it is necessary to take into account the emoji that correspond to the identity of the brand, its objectives, the nature and culture of the audience and society.
- Not all brands need to incorporate emoji into their campaigns, but they should monitor the audience's preferences and achieve pleasure and persuasion for them.
- The importance of cultural, sexual and religious considerations of the advertised topic should be considered.

Conclusion:

Emojis have become a communication reality, at least for a large mass base, which is the future of human communication. Emojis are mainly associated with the emergence of social networking sites, as they work to demystify the intention behind the message and better express the messages. Attention must be paid to employing them in good ways that ensure their effectiveness, with the interest in studying their meanings and interpretations and their impact on Egyptian society. Emojis can be used as a single tool in digital campaigns, and can also be used with other tools as complementary treatments and compatible with the objectives of the advertising campaign, provided that they are not overused and used in the appropriate manner and at the appropriate time with the appropriate content for the purpose of the brand and the advertisement.

Their use in societal issues provides the audience with pleasure and attracts attention, especially in the digital environment and the audience of contemporary generation, as they add an emotional dimension to the advertisement.

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