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**ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

**Support** - None.  
**Review Stage at time of this submission** - Preliminary searches.  
**Conflicts of interest** - None declared.  
**INPLASY registration number:** INPLASY202550094

**Amendments** - This protocol was registered with the International Platform of Registered Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Protocols (INPLASY) on 30 May 2025 and was last updated on 30 May 2025.

**INTRODUCTION**

**Review question / Objective** Objectives: To identify how emojis are researched and implemented in the context of marketing and advertising.  
To synthesize the methodological approaches and theoretical frameworks applied in the literature of emojis in marketing and advertising.  
To identify gaps in current research and propose recommendations for future empirical studies.

**Background** Emojis have become an integral part of digital communication, universally and increasingly used in marketing to capture attention, convey emotion, and shape consumer perception. Brands frequently use emojis in advertisements and email campaigns to increase user engagement. Despite their widespread use, academic research on the strategic role of emojis in marketing communications and especially in advertising remains scattered, with limited synthesis of findings across studies, platforms, and contexts.

There is currently a growing need to understand how brands use emojis within their persuasive marketing messages. This scoping review aims to map the existing evidence on emoji use in online marketing, including advertising, to identify methodological and theoretical patterns, and to highlight the gaps for future studies.

**Rationale** While emojis have been used prominently as visual cues in digital marketing communications, particularly advertising, the way they are studied and implemented varies widely across the literature. Some studies report positive effects, such as improved click-through rates, higher engagement, or enhanced message recall, suggesting that emojis can function as effective paralinguistic cues that carry emotion and semantic congruence (Jeon, 2022; Das et al., 2019). Conversely, other research highlights neutral or adverse effects. (Mladenović et al., 2022; Madadi et al., 2024). These mixed findings are partly attributable to the diverse theoretical lenses and methodological heterogeneity employed across studies. Research also varies in platform focus, target audiences, and

the operationalization of outcomes like engagement or purchase behavior.

Given this fragmentation, there is a clear need for a structured synthesis of how emojis are studied and applied in marketing and advertising contexts. This scoping review will map current practices, summarize methodological and theoretical trends, and lay the foundation for more coherent future studies.

## METHODS

### Strategy of data synthesis

emoji OR emoticon OR emojis OR emoticons  
AND

"advertising" OR "ads" OR "advertisements" OR  
"marketing" OR "digital marketing" OR  
"ecommerce" OR "e-commerce" OR "e  
commerce".

**Eligibility criteria** English only. The article is a peer-reviewed journal article.

The use of emojis is about brand communications. The study is situated in a digital marketing context. Exclusion criteria: The focus is on user generated content. Purely linguistic or semiotic analysis with no consumer focus.

### Source of evidence screening and selection

The screening and selection process will follow the PRISMA-ScR guidelines. All retrieved records will be imported into Rayyan, an online tool designed to facilitate systematic screening. Two reviewers will independently conduct title and abstract screening based on predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Any disagreements will be discussed and resolved through consensus. If necessary, a third reviewer will be consulted to arbitrate.

After initial screening, full-text articles of potentially eligible studies will be retrieved and reviewed for final inclusion. Reasons for exclusion at the full-text stage will be documented. The entire selection process will be tracked and presented in a PRISMA-ScR flow diagram, indicating the number of records identified, screened, included, and excluded at each stage.

**Data management** All references retrieved from the database searches will be exported into a citation management tool (Mendeley) to manage duplicates. The deduplicated dataset will be imported into Rayyan for title and abstract screening.

During the full-text review phase, eligible studies will be tracked and organized using a standardized data charting (extraction) form, developed in

Microsoft Excel/Google Sheets. This form will include fields such as publication details, study context, type and use of emojis, platform/channel, outcome measures (e.g., engagement, purchase intention), methodology, and key findings.

The extracted data will be analyzed descriptively and synthesized thematically to answer the research questions. All documentation, including search strategies, screening decisions, data extraction files, and analysis notes, will be securely stored in a cloud-based folder (Google Drive) with access limited to the research team.

**Reporting results / Analysis of the evidence** The results of this scoping review will be reported following the PRISMA-ScR (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews) guidelines. A descriptive synthesis will be used to present findings across included studies.

The data will be analyzed and reported thematically based on the following dimensions:

- 1.Context of emoji use (e.g., advertising channel, e-commerce sector, message format)
- 2.Types and communicative functions of emojis (e.g., emotional, attention-grabbing, symbolic)
- 3.Placement and frequency of emojis in marketing messages
- 4.User response outcomes, including engagement (e.g., click-through rate, open rate) and purchase-related behavior (e.g., purchase intention, conversion rate)
- 5.Methodological characteristics of the studies, including design type, sample size, and platform
- 6.Theoretical frameworks underpinning the research

The analysis will identify trends, patterns, and methodological gaps in the literature. Where applicable, a bibliometric overview (e.g., most cited studies, keyword co-occurrence) will also be provided to complement the thematic synthesis. No statistical meta-analysis will be conducted. Findings will be used to inform a future research agenda.

**Presentation of the results** The findings of the scoping review will be presented using a combination of narrative summary, tables, and descriptive figures. A PRISMA-ScR flow diagram will illustrate the study selection process, including the number of records identified, screened, assessed for eligibility, and included. Where appropriate, bar charts or frequency tables will be used to summarize emoji categories, outcomes measured, and platforms studied. A bibliometric

visualization (e.g., keyword co-occurrence or author map) may also be included if sufficient metadata is available.

**Language restriction** Language is inclusion criterion. Only articles in English language will be included.

**Country(ies) involved** Greece.

**Keywords** emojis, consumer behavior, online marketing, advertising.

**Dissemination plans** The findings of this scoping review will be submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed academic journal relevant to marketing, digital communication, or consumer behavior. Examples of journals are: Behavioral Sciences Journal, the Journal of Interactive Marketing, Journal of Advertising Research, or International Journal of Advertising.

A preprint version of the manuscript may also be shared via the Open Science Framework (OSF) to ensure transparency and early access. Visual summaries and key insights will be disseminated through academic social media platforms (e.g., LinkedIn, ResearchGate, Twitter) to reach both scholarly and practitioner audiences.

If feasible, the results may also be presented at marketing or consumer psychology conferences (e.g., EMAC, ACR, or AMA) to stimulate discussion and connect with other researchers interested in digital marketing, emotion, and behavioral response.

Finally, the review is intended to serve as the theoretical and empirical foundation for a subsequent doctoral research project involving experimental studies on emoji use in real-world e-commerce campaigns.

#### **Contributions of each author**

Author 1 - Chrysopigi Vardikou.

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Author 2 - Agisilaos Konidaris - The author will supervise the process and will solve any disagreements between the first and second reviewer about the articles to be included in the research.

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Author 3 - Erato Koustoumpardi - The author will review the list of articles with the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

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