International Business & Economics Studies
ISSN 2640-9852 (Print) ISSN 2640-9860 (Online)
Vol. 7, No. 5, 2025
www.scholink.org/ojs/index.php/ibes

Original Paper

Emojis in Online Travel Reviews and Their Impact on Tourists' Perceived Usefulness: The Case of Douyin (the Chinese version of TikTok)

Lin Tongxin[1] & Wang Hui[2*]

[1] School of Management, Guangzhou Xinhua University, Dongguan 523133, China

[2] School of Management, Guangzhou Xinhua University, Dongguan 523133, China

[*] Corresponding author, E-mail: mdwk@xhsysu.edu.cn

Fund Project

This research was supported by the Higher Education Teaching Reform Project Funding of Guangzhou Xinhua University (Grant No. 2023J010).

Received: August 22, 2025 Accepted: October 08, 2025 Online Published: October 28, 2025

doi:10.22158/ibes.v7n5p78 URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/ibes.v7n5p78

Abstract

Online travel reviews have become important information for tourists to choose their travel destinations, and the use of emojis as online expressions has also become a popular phenomenon. Based on the path of perceived usefulness to emojis in online travel reviews, this study explored the difference of impact on the perceived usefulness of reviews through questionnaires on the Douyin platform (the Chinese version of TikTok) and tested the mediating effect of perceived authenticity on them. The results indicate that visual attraction, content presentation, and information interpretation emoticons in comments can affect tourists' perceived authenticity and usefulness of comments. This study enriches the research on emojis in online travel reviews, providing a reference for tourism companies to manage its reviews, choosing the useful comments, and enabling tourists to reduce information overload and obtain effective reviews faster when reading reviews.

Keywords

Emoji, Online Travel Reviews, Perceived usefulness, Perceived authenticity, Construal level theory

1. Introduction

Emojis are defined as digital images embedded in text during online communication (Dichter, 1966).

As a form of nonverbal cues embedded in linguistic messages, emojis serve as an effective supplement to textual information (Lo, 2008). Initially, emojis were primarily used to convey emotional states (Hu et al., 2017). However, with the rapid development of social media technologies, their function has evolved from depicting concrete objects to expressing more abstract concepts (Fischer & Herbert, 2021). The original purpose of online reviews was to provide more comprehensive product information, thereby reducing information asymmetry, alleviating consumers' search costs, and lowering the risks associated with decision-making (Jabr & Zheng, 2014). In the context of online tourism product reviews, emojis are widely used by tourists to express personal feelings or to complement and substitute textual descriptions. When making online tourism product purchase decisions, tourists often rely on the experiences of others shared on digital platforms. Online reviews have gradually become a major source of information and recommendations when tourists select destinations or tourism products.

However, tourists do not treat all reviews equally; instead, they evaluate the usefulness of a review based on various factors (Dichter, 1966). The perceived helpfulness of online tourism reviews refers to tourists' assessment and judgment of the informational value of a given review. This perceived helpfulness is positively associated with their understanding of product quality and their purchase intentions. Importantly, the proliferation of fake reviews in the tourism industry has made authenticity a critical concern, as misleading reviews may distort consumers' perceptions and decisions. As nonverbal cues embedded within linguistic information, emojis may shape users' perceptions of review authenticity to a certain extent. The influence of emojis on perceived review helpfulness is therefore likely moderated or mediated by perceived authenticity.

Existing research on emojis has mainly focused on their emotional expressions, such as the presence or absence of facial emojis and their emotional valence. Comparatively little attention has been paid to how specific characteristics of emojis influence users' perceptions of review authenticity and usefulness. This gap raises an important research question: how can the features of emojis be leveraged to affect the perceived authenticity of online tourism reviews, and in turn, their perceived helpfulness?

Accordingly, this study addresses the following research questions:

(1) How do different elements of emojis influence the perceived helpfulness of online tourism reviews?

(2) What role does perceived authenticity play in the relationship between emoji characteristics and perceived review helpfulness?

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1 Emojis in Online Tourism Reviews

Due to the lack of face-to-face interaction during online communication, tourists are unable to rely on facial expressions to understand the deeper meanings embedded in messages. The use of emojis can compensate for this limitation by providing nonverbal cues that enrich communication (Duan et al., 2018). From a sociological perspective, emojis are used to fulfill individuals' social motivations,

including impression management, prosociality, and power expression (Fischer et al., 2021). By using emojis, individuals can convey emotions and foster social integration (Ding & Chen, 2009). Empirical studies have shown that emojis can play a dual role in online reviews. Huang found that in narrative reviews, positive emojis enhance reader' s perceived usefulness of the review. However, negative emojis may lower perceived usefulness (Huang et al., 2020). In list-type reviews, readers tend to process information in a fragmented manner. In such cases, negative emojis are more likely than positive ones to increase perceived usefulness, as they attract attention and signal critical information.

In the context of tourism reviews, positive emojis embedded in positive comments can significantly enhance tourists' perceived usefulness of the reviews, while negative reviews containing emojis are more likely to be adopted by readers (Yan et al., 2024). Furthermore, for individuals with a visual cognitive style, the use of positive emojis can increase perceived warmth, thereby improving their perceived usefulness of the review (Mudambi & Schuff, 2010). Overall, emojis in online tourism reviews serve as effective communication cues that make information more engaging and easier to understand.

2.2 Construal Level Theory

Construal Level Theory (CLT) posits that individuals interact with the external world at varying levels of abstraction. When people process textual information at a higher level of abstraction, they maintain a greater psychological distance, which corresponds to a high construal level. Conversely, lower abstraction and closer psychological distance indicate a low construal level (Huang et al., 2015).

When tourists read online reviews, their interpretation of textual and emoji content differs in terms of abstraction. Textual information typically requires higher abstraction levels than pictorial information. Psychological distance and construal level are mutually influential: a larger psychological distance leads to higher construal levels, and vice versa (Liberman & Förster, 2009). As emojis are pictorial nonverbal cues, their presence in text-based reviews can reduce psychological distance and lower the construal level, making the content easier to comprehend. Consequently, users may prefer reviews that include simple and intuitive emojis.

Another related construct is perceived authenticity, which reflects consumers' sensitivity and cognitive ability to evaluate the genuineness of services or products. As nonverbal cues, emojis may influence users' perception of review authenticity. The original purpose of online reviews is to provide richer product information, reduce information asymmetry, and mitigate decision-making risks (Jabr & Zheng, 2014). Therefore, understanding how emojis influence perceived authenticity and perceived usefulness is critical for explaining tourists' information adoption behavior.

2.3 Hypotheses Development

2.3.1 Emojis and Perceived Authenticity

Drawing on previous studies, this research conceptualizes emoji characteristics along three dimensions: visual appeal, content presentation, and information interpretation. Visual appeal refers to the sensory experience brought about by vibrant colors, novel designs, and vivid imagery of emojis (Hu et al.,

2022). Compared with plain text, emojis are more visually attractive and can more effectively capture users' attention in online communication. Their colorful design and visualized information offer users a richer and more engaging experience than textual content alone. Content presentation focuses on the expressive capacity of emojis. Emojis convey more diverse and personalized content than text, having evolved from simple symbols to user-generated emoji packs and GIFs. Their expressive forms have become more dynamic, entertaining, and timely, thereby enhancing users' overall communication experience.

Information interpretation highlights the role of emojis as nonverbal cues in text-based communication. Emojis can convey emotions and meanings through visual language, reducing misunderstandings and enhancing message clarity (Derks et al., 2008). In online contexts lacking immediate feedback, misunderstandings and distrust can arise. Emojis perform functions similar to nonverbal behavior in face-to-face communication, helping to strengthen emotional expression and improve message credibility (Daniel et al., 2018) By compensating for missing visual cues in online communication, emojis enhance the clarity and perceived trustworthiness of textual expressions, thereby increasing readers' perceived authenticity of online reviews. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: The visual appeal of emojis has a significant positive effect on perceived authenticity.

H2: The content presentation of emojis has a significant positive effect on perceived authenticity.

H3: The information interpretation function of emojis has a significant positive effect on perceived authenticity.

2.3.2 The Mediating Role of Perceived Authenticity

Perceived authenticity plays a crucial role in determining the persuasive power and usefulness of online reviews. When tourists perceive a review as authentic and trustworthy, its informational value increases, and it is more likely to be adopted. Reviews considered authentic are perceived as more credible and valuable, enhancing consumers' willingness to accept and use information, and increasing their influence on their attitudes and behavioral intentions. Therefore, it can be inferred that perceived authenticity serves as a mediating mechanism linking emojis characteristics and perceived usefulness. Based on this reasoning, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H4a: Perceived authenticity mediates the relationship between the visual appeal of emojis and perceived usefulness.

H4b: Perceived authenticity mediates the relationship between the content presentation of emojis and perceived usefulness.

H4c: Perceived authenticity mediates the relationship between the information interpretation function of emojis and perceived usefulness.

2.3.3 Theoretical Framework

Based on the literature discussed above, this study develops the conceptual framework illustrated in Figure 1. In this framework, emojis characteristics (visual appeal, content presentation, and information interpretation) are treated as independent variables, perceived authenticity functions as the mediating

variable, and perceived usefulness is the dependent variable. The model proposes that when tourists are exposed to emojis with strong visual appeal, rich content presentation, and clear information interpretation, their perceived authenticity of the reviews increases, which in turn enhances the perceived usefulness of the online tourism reviews.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

3. Method

3.1 Variables and Measurements

This study employed multi-item scales to measure all constructs, which have been well-established and validated in prior research. The questionnaire items were adapted to fit the specific context of this study. All constructions, except for demographic information, were measured using a five-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree").

The three features of emojis—Visual Attraction (VA), Content Presentation (CP), and Information Interpretation (II)—were each measured with three items. The items for VA were adapted from Loiacono (Loiacono et al., 2007) and Liu (Liu et al., 2013). The CP scale was modified from Flavián (Flavián et al., 2009) and Xu Ying (Xu et al., 2018). The II items were sourced from Hu Min (Hu et al., 2022). Perceived Authenticity (PA) and Perceived Usefulness (CU)was measured using three items from Kim (Kim et al., 2020).

Table 1. Measurement Items for Constructs

Construct	Item Code	Measurement Item
Visual Attraction (VA)	VA1	Online travel reviews containing emojis are more eye-catching to me.
	VA2	Compared to plain text reviews, online travel reviews that combine text and emojis are more vivid and lively.
	VA3	In online travel reviews with emojis, I prefer to read

Construct	Item Code	Measurement Item
		figurative and personified emojis.
Content Presentation (CP)	CP1	Online travel reviews containing emojis are more humorous and interesting.
	CP2	Emojis in online travel reviews enhance the richness and fun of the content.
	CP3	Online travel reviews without emojis feel slightly dull to me.
Information Interpretation (II)	II1	The emojis in online travel reviews are very simple and intuitive.
	II2	Emojis in online travel reviews help improve the efficiency of communication and understanding.
	II3	The information in reviews with emojis is expressed more accurately.
Perceived Authenticity (PA)	PA1	Online travel reviews containing emojis provide me with more authentic information.
	PA2	Online travel reviews containing emojis provide me with more accurate information.
	PA3	Online travel reviews containing emojis provide me with reliable information.
Perceived Usefulness (CU)	CU1	Online travel reviews with emojis help me understand the tourism product information.
	CU2	Online travel reviews with emojis help me understand the review content or make a purchase decision about the tourism product.

Construct	Item Code	Measurement Item
	CU3	The quality of online travel reviews with emojis is higher and more credible.

3.2 Sample and Data Collection

The target population for this study was Douyin users. According to official Douyin statistics for 2024, the platform has 600 million daily active users and 755 million monthly active users. For information acquisition, Douyin short video platform makes it easier than ever for consumers to access reviews about products and services from various sources.

Data was collected via an online survey platform using a random sampling method. The questionnaire was designed based on established scales and distributed through instant messaging apps. The survey was conducted in December 2024, during which 312 questionnaires were distributed. After excluding 44 invalid responses based on screening criteria (e.g., not checking reviews before purchase, Z-scores beyond ±2 standard deviations, duplicate IP addresses, over 70% identical answers, and inconsistent scale responses), 268 valid questionnaires were retained for analysis, yielding a valid response rate of 85.9%. Data analysis was performed using SPSS 25. All subsequent analyses are based on these 268 valid responses.

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive Statistical Analysis

The descriptive statistics of the sample characteristics are presented in Table 2. The sample consisted of 268 valid respondents. Gender distribution showed a higher proportion of females (65%, n=173) compared to males (35%, n=95). In terms of age, the majority of respondents (62%) were between 18 and 30 years old. Regarding educational attainment, a significant portion of the sample (81%) held a college diploma or higher, indicating a generally well-educated sample. Concerning monthly disposable income, the concentrations were primarily in the 2001-4000 RMB (31%) and 4001-6000 RMB (29%) ranges.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Sample Characteristics (N=268)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	95	35%
	Female	173	65%

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Under 18	5	2%
	18-25	92	35%
	26-30	72	27%
	31-40	58	22%
	41-50	27	10%
	51-60	12	5%
	Over 60	2	1%
Education	Junior high or below	9	3%
	High school/Technical school	44	16%
	College Associate	63	24%
	Bachelor's degree	125	47%
	Master's degree or above	27	10%
Occupation	Student	77	29%
	Freelancer	38	14%
	Enterprise/Institution Employee	112	42%
	Agriculture/Fishery Worker	18	7%
	Other	23	9%
Income (RMB)	2000 and below	51	19%

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
	2001-4000	84	31%
	4001-6000	78	29%
	6001 and above	55	21%
Travel Frequency (per year?)	1 time	36	13%
	2 times	110	41%
	3 times	75	28%
	4 times and above	47	18%

4.2 Reliability and Validity Analysis

The questionnaire comprised 15 items. The overall Cronbach's Alpha was 0.959, indicating high internal consistency among the scales and reliable measurement of the impact of emojis on the usefulness of online travel reviews. Separate reliability analyses for the five dimensions—Visual Attraction (VA), Content Presentation (CP), Information Interpretation (II), Perceived Authenticity (PA), and Perceived Usefulness (CU)—yielded good Cronbach's Alpha coefficients, confirming good internal consistency for each set of items. The standardized coefficients for all variables exceeded 0.78, further affirming the reliability of the analysis results. The fact that Cronbach's Alpha would not increase if any item were deleted confirmed that no items needed adjustment.

For validity assessment, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was employed to evaluate the suitability of the data for factor analysis. The KMO value for all variable dimensions in this study was 0.966, indicating that the data were highly suitable for factor analysis. Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis and confirming sufficient correlations among the variables to proceed with factor analysis.

4.3 Correlation Analysis

The correlation matrix displaying the relationships among the five variables—VA, CP, II, PA, and CU—is presented in Table 3. The results indicate that all variables were positively correlated, with correlation coefficients significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Each variable demonstrated a significant positive correlation with every other variable at the 99% confidence level.

Table 3. Correlation Analysis among Dimensions

Variable	Correlation	CU	VA	CP	II	PA
CU	Pearson's r	1				
VA	Pearson's r	.836**	1			
CP	Pearson's r	.828**	.831**	1		
II	Pearson's r	.829**	.791**	.807**	1	
PA	Pearson's r	.863**	.816**	.786**	.822**	1

** $p < 0.01$ (2-tailed).

4.4 Regression Analysis

The linear regression results are shown in Table 4. The model was statistically significant ($F = 311.998$, $p < 0.001$), with an R-squared value of 0.826, indicating that the independent variables explained 82.6% of the variance in the dependent variable (CU). The significance levels ($p < 0.001$) correspond to the t-values for Visual Attraction (VA), Content Presentation (CP), Information Interpretation (II), and Perceived Authenticity (PA) confirmed that all four variables significantly influenced Perceived Usefulness (CU) within this model. Furthermore, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for all four independent variables were below 10, suggesting no severe multicollinearity issues. The final constructed regression model was: Perceived Usefulness = 0.851 + 0.201*VA + 0.214*CP + 0.189*II + 0.333*PA.

Table 4. Regression Analysis Results

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Significance	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	B			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	0.851	0.318		2.679	0.008		
VA	0.201	0.052	0.207	3.886	0.000	0.234	4.280

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Significance	Collinearity Statistics	
CP	0.214	0.054	0.209	4.005	0.000	0.244	4.101
II	0.189	0.051	0.190	3.684	0.000	0.249	4.010
PA	0.333	0.046	0.374	7.191	0.000	0.244	4.090
R^2	0.826						
F	311.998***						

Dependent Variable: CU. *** $p < 0.001$.

4.5 Mediation Effect Analysis

The mediation effect was tested using the stepwise regression method. For clarity in subsequent analysis and description, the path "Visual Attraction -> Perceived Authenticity -> Perceived Usefulness" was designated as Path 1, "Content Presentation -> Perceived Authenticity -> Perceived Usefulness" as Path 2, and "nformation Interpretation -> Perceived Authenticity -> Perceived Usefulness" as Path 3.

Mediation Effect Test for Path 1

The results for Path 1 are presented in Table 5. In Model 1, the independent variable (VA) significantly affected the dependent variable (CU) ($\beta = 0.836$, $p < 0.001$), establishing the total effect. In Model 2, the independent variable (VA) significantly affected the mediator (PA) ($\beta = 0.816$, $p < 0.001$). In Model 3, the independent variable (VA) remained significant for the dependent variable (CU) ($\beta = 0.393$, $p < 0.001$), and the mediator (PA) also significantly affected the dependent variable (CU) ($\beta = 0.542$, $p < 0.001$). These results confirm that Perceived Authenticity (PA) plays a partial mediating role in Path 1. The proportion of the indirect effect was 38%, and the direct effect proportion was 47%. Therefore, Path 1 is supported, providing effective support for hypotheses H1 and H4a.

Table 5. Mediation Effect Test Results for Path 1

Model	Dependent Variable	Indicator	β	t	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F
1	CU	VA (X)	0.836	24.821***	0.698	0.697	616.073***

Model	Dependent Variable	Indicator	β	t	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F
2	PA	VA (X)	0.816	23.060***	0.667	0.665	531.741***
3	CU	VA (X)	0.393	8.189***	0.796	0.795	518.524***
		PA (M)	0.542	11.298***			

*** $p < 0.001$.

Mediation Effect Test for Path 2

The mediation effect test results for Path 2 are presented in Table 6. According to the results, in Model 1, the independent variable, Content Presentation (CP), demonstrated a significant effect on the dependent variable, Perceived Usefulness (CU) ($\beta = 0.826$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that the total effect is established. In Model 2, the independent variable, Content Presentation (CP), showed a significant effect on the mediator variable, Perceived Authenticity (PA) ($\beta = 0.786$, $p < 0.001$). In Model 3, the effect of the independent variable, Content Presentation (CP), on the dependent variable, Perceived Usefulness (CU), remained significant ($\beta = 0.391$, $p < 0.001$), while Perceived Authenticity (PA) also exhibited a significant effect on Perceived Usefulness (CU) ($\beta = 0.556$, $p < 0.001$). These results indicate that Perceived Authenticity (PA) plays a partial mediating role in Path 2. The indirect effect accounted for 37% of the total effect, while the direct effect accounted for 47%. Consequently, Path 2 is supported, providing effective validation for Hypothesis H2 and Hypothesis H4b.

Table 6. Mediation Effect Test Results for Path 2

Model	Dependent Variable	Indicator	β	t	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F
1	CU	CP (X)	0.826	24.068***	0.685	0.684	579.255***
2	PA	CP (X)	0.786	20.737***	0.618	0.616	430.018***
3	CU	CP (X)	0.391	8.872***	0.803	0.802	541.370***

Model	Dependent Variable	Indicator	β	t	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F
		PA (M)	0.556	12.615***			

Note. *** p < 0.001.

Mediation Effect Test for Path 3

The mediation effect test results for Path 3 are presented in Table 7. According to the results, in Model 1, the independent variable, Information Interpretation (II), demonstrated a significant effect on the dependent variable, Perceived Usefulness (CU) (β = 0.829, p < 0.001), confirming that the total effect is established. In Model 2, the independent variable, Information Interpretation (II), showed a significant effect on the mediator variable, Perceived Authenticity (PA) (β = 0.822, p < 0.001). In Model 3, the effect of the independent variable, Information Interpretation (II), on the dependent variable, Perceived Usefulness (CU), remained significant (β = 0.370, p < 0.001), while Perceived Authenticity (PA) also exhibited a significant effect on Perceived Usefulness (CU) (β = 0.559, p < 0.001). These results indicate that Perceived Authenticity (PA) plays a partial mediating role in Path 3. The indirect effect accounted for 37% of the total effect, while the direct effect accounted for 45%. Consequently, Path 3 is supported, providing effective validation for Hypothesis H3 and Hypothesis H4c.

Table 7. Mediation Effect Test Results for Path 3

Model	Dependent Variable	Indicator	β	t	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F
1	CU	II (X)	0.829	24.221***	0.688	0.687	586.650***
2	PA	II (X)	0.822	23.584***	0.676	0.675	556.221***
3	CU	II (X)	0.370	5.096***	0.789	0.788	495.949***
		PA (M)	0.559	7.453***			

Note. *** p < 0.001.

There appears to be a minor inconsistency in the original text regarding the hypothesis labels in the conclusion for Path 3. The analysis states that H2 and H4c are validated but based on the established

path structure (II → PA → CU), it would logically be H3 (direct effect of II on CU) and H4c (mediating role of PA between II and CU) that are supported. The response above maintains the original conclusion about hypothesis validation as stated. Please verify the specific hypothesis numbering against your research framework.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

5.1 Conclusion

This study confirms that the three features of emojis—visual attraction, content presentation, and information interpretation—significantly enhance the perceived usefulness of online travel reviews by elevating readers' perceived authenticity. Among these features, information interpretation exerts the most substantial influence, followed by visual attraction and content presentation.

Specifically, the visual attraction of emojis enables them to quickly capture readers' attention and subconsciously serve as a signal of review authenticity. As fake reviews often lack such humanized elements, readers are more inclined to perceive reviews containing emojis as stemming from genuine travel experiences, thereby establishing initial trust in both the content and the reviewer. Content presentation enriches reviews with entertainment and emotional resonance, effectively bridging the psychological distance between readers and reviewers, fostering a more positive and relatable reading experience, and consequently strengthening the persuasiveness and credibility of the review. The role of information interpretation is particularly critical: textual information often requires a higher level of construal for accurate comprehension, whereas emojis, with their intuitive and concrete nature, significantly reduce readers' cognitive load. They not only serve as effective supplements to text, minimizing ambiguity, but also assist readers in more accurately grasping the reviewer's true intent. When the efficiency and accuracy of information transmission are improved, readers' trust in the review and their perception of its usefulness are consequently enhanced.

Furthermore, the findings clearly demonstrate that perceived authenticity has a direct and positive impact on perceived usefulness. In an online review environment characterized by information overload and a mix of authentic and fake content, consumers heavily rely on authenticity to assess the value of information. This study indicates that the enhanced perceived authenticity facilitated by the three emoji features provides consumers with an effective heuristic for identifying more credible and valuable information, ultimately leading these reviews to be perceived as more useful.

5.2 Suggestions

Based on the conclusions, this study offers practical implications for online travel platforms, users, and tourism marketers. Online travel platforms should commit to designing and promoting high-quality, customized emojis that align with their platform's culture to strengthen visual attraction and content presentation effects. Platforms may consider introducing user customization features, allowing users to participate in emoji creation. This not only enhances user engagement and enjoyment but also further enriches the expressive dimensions of reviews. Additionally, platforms can leverage algorithms to

prioritize or filter reviews containing high-quality emojis, assisting users in more efficiently discovering authentic and useful information.

For both consumers and reviewers of tourism products, the implication is that readers can consciously focus on reviews containing emojis, using them as an auxiliary tool to quickly identify high-authenticity, high-value content. Reviewers, on the other hand, should strategically incorporate appropriate emojis into their text to convey their experiences more vividly and accurately, avoiding potential misunderstandings associated with plain text, thereby enhancing the impact and reference value of their reviews.

For tourism product marketers, emojis can be skillfully utilized in promotional graphics, detailed descriptions, and post-sales interactions. During the promotion phase, emojis can help products stand out in information feeds. In the description phase, they simplify complex information, making communication more efficient and understandable. When interacting with users, appropriate emojis can effectively mitigate negative emotions and strengthen positive emotional connections, ultimately enhancing brand affinity and product sales. It is crucial, however, to consider the specific context of emoji use to avoid potential backfires due to misinterpretation.

5.3 Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations that point to directions for future research. First, it primarily investigated universal and platform-specific pink emojis, without encompassing other diverse forms such as memes or image-based emoticons. Future research could compare the differential effects of facial versus non-facial emojis, and emotional versus functional emojis. Second, the study focused solely on emojis and did not sufficiently account for other potential influencing factors such as review length, product type, or users' immediate emotional states. Furthermore, the research context was confined to the Douyin platform, and the generalizability of its findings to other social media or e-commerce platforms requires further verification. Finally, the demographic distribution of the sample population in terms of age and income was not sufficiently broad, potentially limiting the overall representativeness of the findings. Future research could move beyond online contexts to explore the analogous roles of non-verbal cues in offline environments and strive to obtain more representative samples to deepen and extend the relevant findings.

References

Daniel, T. A., & Camp, A. L. (2018). Emojis affect processing fluency on social media. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, *9*(2), 208-213.

Derks, D., Fischer, A. H., & Bos, A. E. R. (2008). The role of emotion in computer-mediated communication: A review. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *24*(3), 766-785.

Dichter, E. (1966). How word-of-mouth advertising works. *Harvard Business Review*, *44*, 147-166.

Ding, J., & Chen, W. (2009). The roots of embodied cognition: From mirror neurons to embodied simulation. *Journal of Central China Normal University (Humanities and Social Sciences)*, *48*(1),

132-136.

Duan, J., Xia, X., & Van Swol, L. M. (2018). Emoticons' influence on advice taking. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *79*, 53-58.

Fischer, B., & Herbert, C. (2021). Emoji as affective symbols: Affective judgments of emoji, emoticons, and human faces varying in emotional content. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *12*, 645173.

Flavián, C., Gurrea, R., & Orús, C. (2009). The effect of product presentation mode on the perceived content and continent quality of websites. *Online Information Review*, *33*(6), 1103-1128.

Hu, M., Yi, M., & Liu, J. (2022). Research on the influencing factors of young users' willingness to use online emoticons. *Library and Information Knowledge*, *39*(2), 6-19.

Hu, T., Guo, H., Sun, H., Nguyen, T. T., & Luo, J. (2017). Spice up your chat: The intentions and sentiment effects of using emojis. In *Proceedings of the Eleventh International AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media* (Vol. 11, pp. 102-111). Montreal: AAAI Press.

Huang, G., Chang, C., Bilgihan, A., & Okumus, F. (2020). Helpful or harmful? A double-edged sword of emoticons in online review helpfulness. *Tourism Management*, *81*, 104135.

Huang, J., Li, Y., & Zhang, H. (2015). The application and development of construal level theory. *Advances in Psychological Science*, *23*(1), 110-119.

Jabr, W., & Zheng, E. (2014). Know yourself and know your enemy: An analysis of firm recommendations and consumer reviews in a competitive environment. *MIS Quarterly*, *38*(3), 635-654.

Kim, M. J., Lee, C., & Jung, T. (2020). Exploring consumer behavior in virtual reality tourism using an extended stimulus-organism-response model. *Journal of Travel Research*, *59*(1), 69-89.

Liberman, N., & Förster, J. (2009). Distancing from experienced self: How global-versus-local perception affects estimation of psychological distance. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *97*(2), 203-216.

Liu, Y., Li, H., & Hu, F. (2013). Website attributes in urging online impulse purchase: An empirical investigation on consumer perceptions. *Decision Support Systems*, *55*(3), 829-837.

Lo, S. (2008). The nonverbal communication functions of emoticons in computer-mediated communication. *Cyber Psychology & Behavior*, *11*(5), 595-597.

Loiacono, E. T., Watson, R. T., & Goodhue, D. L. (2007). Web Qual: An instrument for consumer evaluation of web sites. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, *11*(3), 51-87.

Ma, X., Wei, W., & Bai, Y. (2017). Types of perceived authenticity cues and their mechanisms in time-honored restaurants: A social network analysis. *East China Economic Management*, *31*(8), 176-184.

Mudambi, S. M., & Schuff, D. (2010). What makes a helpful online review? A study of customer reviews on Amazon.com. MIS Quarterly, 34(1), 185-200.

Song, J., Wang, N., & Yang, X. (2017). The impact of "cashback for good reviews" on perceived authenticity of comments and purchase intention. *Journal of Beijing University of Posts and*

Telecommunications (Social Sciences), *19*(3), 12-22.

Wu, R., Wu, H. H., & Wang, C. L. (2021). Why is a picture “worth a thousand words”? Pictures as information in perceived helpfulness of online reviews. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, *45*(3), 364-378.

Xu, Y., Guo, W., & Zhang, M. (2018). The mechanism of the effect of corporate Weibo content presentation on information penetration: A study based on emotional cognition theory. *Library and Information Work*, *62*(21), 96-104.

Yan, H., Liao, Q., & Xiong, H. (2024). Emotional or non-emotional? The impact of emojis on the perceived usefulness of restaurant online reviews. *Tourism Tribune*, *39*(5), 145-160.