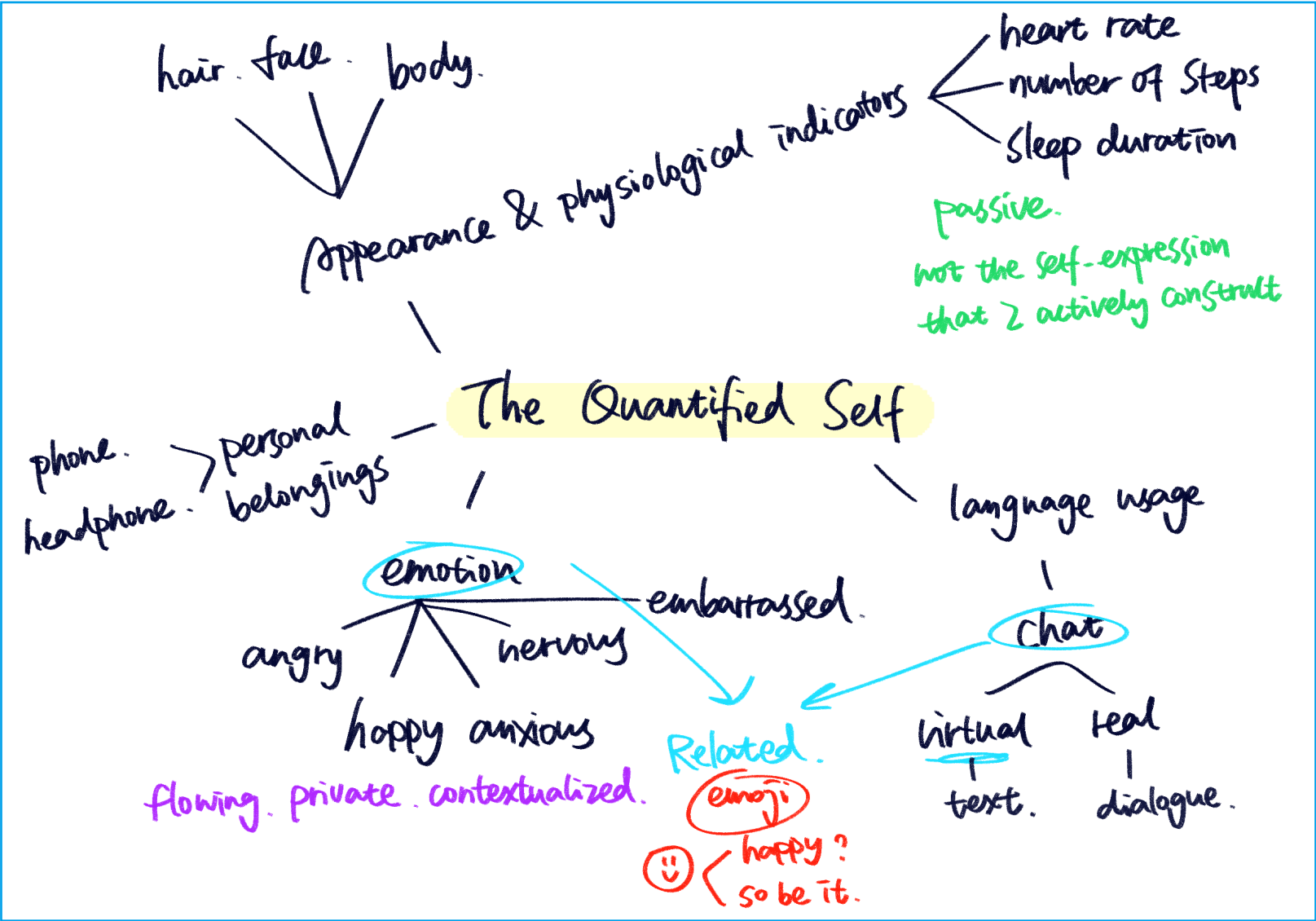


The Quantified Self

CDU Project #3

INSPIRATION

When I first began to explore the topic of The Quantified Self, I launched self-observation from several dimensions, but what I wanted to track was the version of myself as a communicator and meaning-maker. Language use emerged as the first breakthrough point. I noticed that I send hundreds of messages every day, leaving a wealth of traces in this digital age. Emotion is also a crucial influencing factor in conversations, and it was the emojis that lie **between words and emotions** that caught my attention.



In the current era where digital communication dominates daily life, we use **emojis** more frequently than ever before to convey emotions, set the tone of conversations, and even bring exchanges to a close. I have come to realize that emojis are not merely ornamental accessories to communication, but quantifiable carriers that conceal the trajectories of our own emotions.

Yet at the same time, I have observed a contradiction:

frustrated as we may feel inside, we mask it with 😊 in work communications; disheartened as we might be, we resort to self-mockery with 😂 on social media moments.



QUESTION

This phenomenon of inconsistency between emojis and real emotions has sparked a strong desire in me to explore:

Does the type and frequency of emojis we use in online communication truly reflect our dominant emotional states at the moment? Or are they merely a form of "emotional performance" or communicative inertia?

DATA COLLECTION

(Emoji Usage)

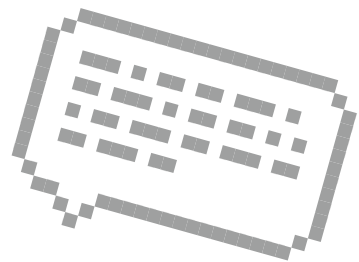
Recording Item - Details

Recording Period	within half a year
Communication Platforms	WeChat / Douyin / Others
Usage Quantity	Total number of emojis sent during the period
Trigger Event	Keywords
Sent Emoji Types	Joyful / Depressive / Neutral / Mocking
Current Mood	Type + Intensity
Whether the mood was expressed via emojis	X / √
Collection methods:	
Manual recording	Use mobile phone memos or paper logs
Auxiliary tools	Screenshots of chat records

(Emotional state)

Recording Item - Details

Recording Period	Consistent with emoji data to ensure alignment
Dominant Mood	Joy / Calmness / Irritation / Anxiety / Sadness / Surprise / Fatigue, etc.
Emotional Intensity	1–5 Scale: 1=Extremely Weak, 5 = Extremely Strong
Trigger Event	Brief keywords (e.g., "Exam Completed", "Chatting with Friends")
Whether the mood was expressed via emojis	X / √



face savoring food

have 5 times

取消

全部

图片与视频

文件

链接

音乐与音频

交易

小程序

视频号

名片

位置

🍽️

了下面夹蟹柳和培根🍽️

breakfast. joy. ✓

3/5

2025/12/5

🍽️

Cook. State the fact

calmness. ✓

1/5

2025/11/4

👩

鱿鱼总会败北

TV drama mocking. X

1/5

2025/7/29

👩

鱿鱼总会败北

Music. neutral. ✓

2/5

2025/7/12

👩

鱿鱼总会败北

hurry up Comfort oneself X

1/5

2025/6/10

Smiling face .angel. blessed.

取消

全部

图片与视频

文件

链接

音乐与音频

交易

小程序

视频号

名片

位置

😇

又急需淘宝了😇

ask for help. anxiety. X

5/5

2025/10/30

😇

鱿鱼总会败北

name collision speechless. helpness X

2/5

2025/6/27

👩

鱿鱼总会败北

badminton depressive. X

2/5

2025/8/31

👩

鱿鱼总会败北

hungry. mocking. Console oneself X

1/5

2025/8/6

Emoji Tag Cloud

Emoji Tag Cloud

Emoji Tag Cloud

SKETCH

Visualisation Design 1

small → large: The number of repetitions of emojis in the same message

Visualisation Design 2

Record daily emotions over the next 3 months.

Emotional types: distinguished by colour.

joy red.

calm blue

irritability yellow

anxiety orange

sadness gray.

surprise purple.

Week.

day

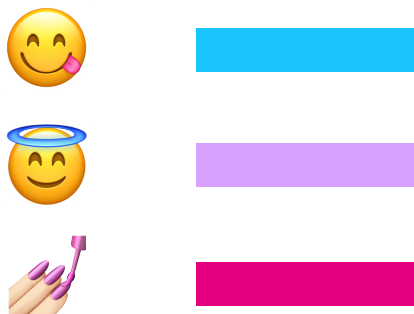
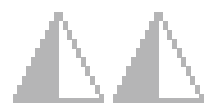
1 month

2 month

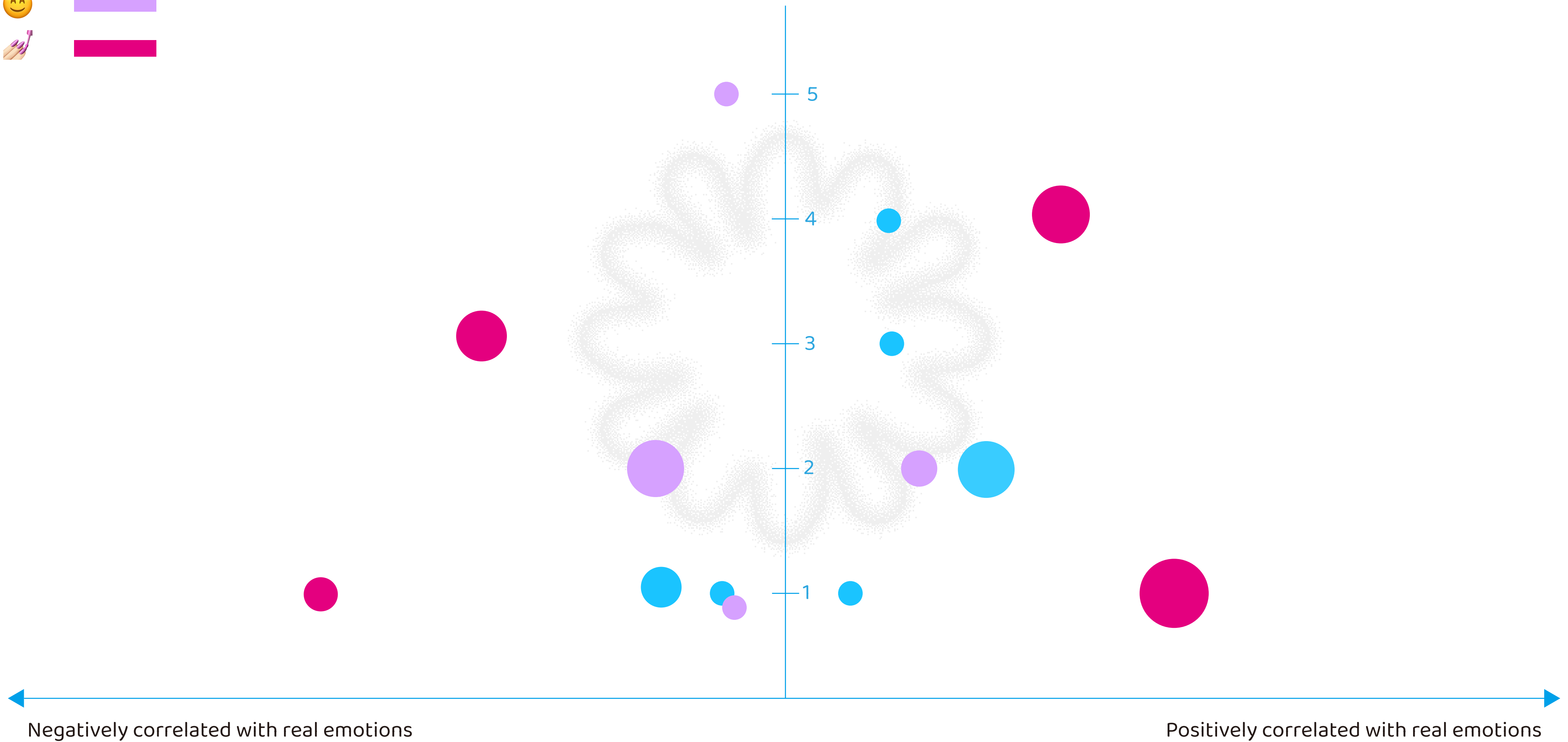
3 month

The first day of each month

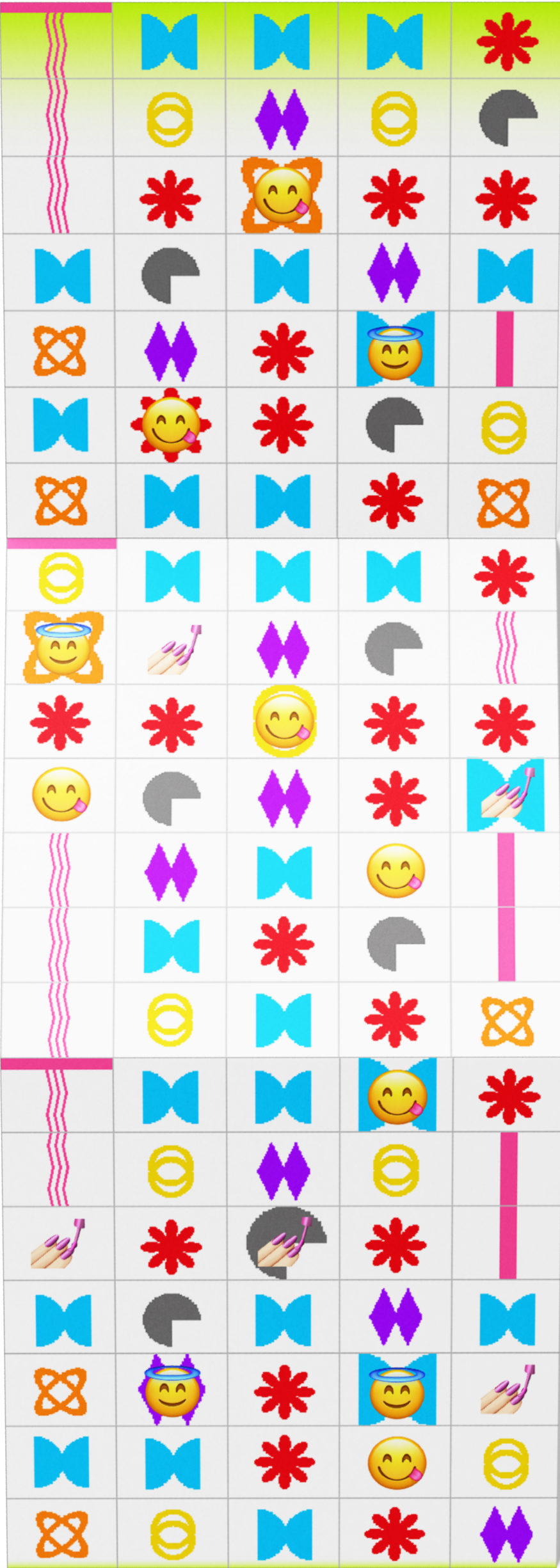
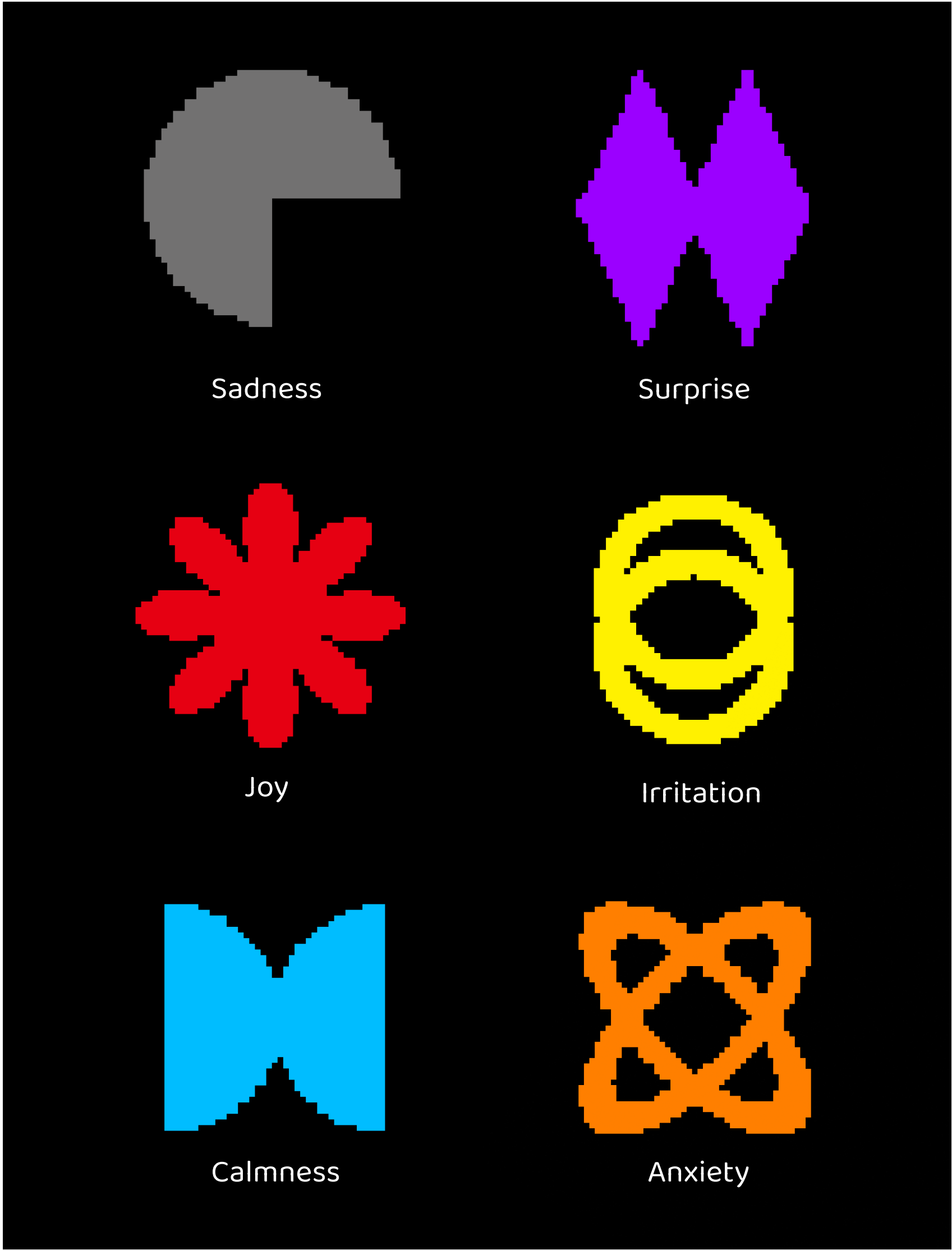
OUTCOME



The number of times emojis are sent



Visualization of emotional states



REFLECTION

Through the documentation and analysis of emoji usage and emotional logs, this project aims to explore the subtle relationship between "expression" and "sensation" in the digital age, and to reveal how we convey emotions through symbols, as well as whether such symbols truly reflect our inner states.

Returning to the original question I intended to verify, there are indeed occasions when I use emojis to embellish or conceal my authentic emotions. When experiencing mild irritation or stress, I still resort to using 🥰 or 🙌 in my replies to maintain a friendly tone of conversation — this constitutes a form of social etiquette.

Differences exist in emoji usage habits and emotional expression patterns among different individuals. Thus, the final conclusions can only serve as a case reference at the personal level.