al-Balagh

Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi

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FROM JOKE TO JOURNALISM: THE EVOLUTION OF MEMES IN MASS COMMUNICATION

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Keywords:	**Abstract**
journalism; mass communication; memes; public discourse	*The emergence of memes as a prevalent form of communication in the digital age has transformed them from simple humor to influential tools shaping public opinion and societal dynamics. This study tracks memes' evolution from fundamental humor to political discourse and social mobilization in mass media. The study uses theoretical frameworks to trace memes' progression from amusing content to a major form of visual communication in the digital age. The study shows that memes have gone from amusing diversions to shaping public opinion. Mass communication relies on memes to influence public opinion, social awareness, and political outcomes. The paper discusses how memes have disrupted journalism and allowed anyone to participate in public debate through satire and critique. The study also examines the ethical issues surrounding memes in mass communication, shedding light on their potential effects. This research sheds light on memes' significant role in shaping public discourse, influencing beliefs, and engaging diverse audiences in discussions about social and political issues. By exploring the evolution of memes in mass communication, this study highlights their potential to disrupt journalism, spark public debate, and raise ethical considerations.*

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Kata kunci:	**Abstrak**
jurnalisme; komunikasi massa; meme; wacana publik	Kemunculan meme sebagai bentuk komunikasi yang lazim di era digital telah mengubah meme dari sekadar humor menjadi alat yang berpengaruh dalam membentuk opini publik dan dinamika masyarakat. Studi ini menelusuri evolusi meme dari humor fundamental hingga wacana politik dan mobilisasi sosial di media massa. Studi ini menggunakan kerangka teoritis untuk menelusuri perkembangan meme dari konten lucu menjadi bentuk komunikasi visual utama di era digital. Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa meme telah berubah dari hiburan yang lucu menjadi membentuk opini publik. Komunikasi massa bergantung pada meme untuk mempengaruhi opini publik, kesadaran sosial, dan hasil politik. Makalah ini membahas bagaimana meme telah mengganggu jurnalisme dan memungkinkan siapa pun berpartisipasi dalam debat publik melalui sindiran dan kritik. Studi ini juga mengkaji isu-isu etika seputar meme dalam komunikasi massa, dan menyoroti potensi dampaknya. Penelitian ini menyoroti peran penting meme dalam membentuk wacana publik, memengaruhi keyakinan, dan melibatkan beragam khalayak dalam diskusi tentang isu-isu sosial dan politik. Dengan mengeksplorasi evolusi meme dalam komunikasi massa, penelitian ini menyoroti potensi meme dalam mengganggu jurnalisme, memicu perdebatan publik, dan meningkatkan pertimbangan etis.

How to cite this (APA 7th Edition):

Srikandi, M. B., Wahab, H. A., & Latupeirissa, J. J. P. (2024). From Joke To Journalism: The Evolution Of Memes In Mass Communication, *Al-Balagh : Jurnal Dakwah Dan Komunikasi*, *9*(2), 191 – 230, https://doi.org/10.22515/albalagh.v9i2.7751

INTRODUCTION

Background Of The Study

The emergence of memes as a means of widespread communication has been a captivating occurrence in recent times. The internet and social media platforms have facilitated a distinctive environment for generating, distributing, and propagating memes (Seiffert-Brockmann, Diehl, & Dobusch, 2018). Furthermore, it is essential to thoroughly examine these patterns over time, considering their consequences for political communication and journalism, education and learning, health communication, science communication, and overall societal influence. The theoretical framework for comprehending the existence and growth of memes encompasses concepts such as user-

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generated content, intertextuality, discursive kinds, and the significance of humor and irony (Hakoköngäs, Halmesvaara, & Sakki, 2020).

The rise of commercial social media platforms has made memes a fundamental component of mainstream digital culture. Trillò & Shifman (2021) published a paper in 2021, given the dynamic nature of memes as they circulate, researchers face a significant barrier in making accurate conclusions based on a collection of memes as tangible digital objects (Seiffert-Brockmann et al., 2018). The term "meme" is comparable to the biological term "gene" and pertains to self-replicating communication in digital media that transmits cultural ideas or content. Memes can undergo a process of variation, competition, selection, and retention, transforming from individual messages to widely shared social phenomena (Rieger & Klimmt, 2019).

Biologist Richard Dawkins introduced the idea of a meme in the 1970s to describe how cultural information, such as conventions, attitudes, values, and beliefs, is transmitted between individuals. Memes and digital culture are highly compatible and complement each other perfectly (Zulli & Zulli, 2022). Crisis memes are a captivating and prominent aspect of the COVID-19 public discussion (Pulos, 2020).

The growth of memes in mass communication encompasses humor, entertainment, and journalism (Seiffert-Brockmann et al., 2018). As memes become increasingly popular for widespread communication, they have also been integrated into journalism. Once seen as a comical and light-hearted type of online material, memes have evolved into a potent medium for effectively communicating news and information succinctly and captivatingly.

This expansion is a prime example of memes' adaptability to the changing media landscape and their ability to convey complex ideas in an aesthetically pleasing and easily shared manner. In the world of journalism, memes have made it easier for news to spread quickly, particularly on social media sites where users have short attention spans and enjoy visually stimulating content. In journalism, memes serve as a way to draw in and hold readers' attention while making complex or dense content more readable and enjoyable.

Memes in journalism are an example of a broader trend in digital culture: audiences are most engaged, and complex ideas are best expressed through visual and

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concise forms of communication. Memes have emerged as a potent medium for journalists to convey news items, viewpoints, and societal analysis in a manner that strongly connects with modern audiences (Bene, 2017).

The use of memes in journalism has been observed to enhance the reach and engagement of health campaigns and social media influencers, indicating the effectiveness of memes in conveying important messages and promoting public discourse (Kostygina et al., 2020). Memes serve as a bridge between traditional journalism and digital media, offering a novel approach to narrative and engagement with diverse audiences (Herbenick et al., 2023).

Research Gap

Integrating memes in journalism offers a unique opportunity to blend entertainment with information, creating a delicate balance that can enhance news coverage while maintaining accuracy and credibility. Conceptually conceptualized initially as units of cultural information by Dawkins, memes have evolved into powerful tools for conveying messages and engaging audiences. Journalists, when utilizing memes, ensure that the core message remains intact without compromising accuracy or depth for humor or virality. This necessitates a careful approach to meme usage to prevent the spread of misinformation and uphold journalistic standards (Zulli & Zulli, 2022).

Because of their capacity to spread widely and garner attention, memes have been found to be useful instruments for capturing audiences' interest and igniting conversations (Bene, 2017). They can serve as catalysts for critical thinking and meaningful dialogue, challenging assumptions and encouraging deeper engagement with the content. By leveraging the virality of memes, journalists can reach wider audiences and stimulate conversations that contribute to informed public discourse. However, journalists must wield memes responsibly, considering ethical implications related to stereotypes, misinformation, and potentially harmful narratives (Bene, 2017).

The evolution of memes from humour to journalism illustrates mass communication. As memes become more common in journalism, professionals must assess their impact and consider how they might help achieve accurate and ethical

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reporting. In addressing how memes should be used in journalism, it is crucial to balance entertainment and information. Memes should enhance news coverage by maintaining accuracy, credibility, and depth in storytelling, ensuring that the core message is not diluted for humor or virality (Bene, 2017).

Journalists must use memes responsibly to avoid misinformation and uphold journalistic standards. Moreover, memes should promote critical thinking and meaningful dialogue among audiences, sparking discussions and challenging assumptions rather than fostering superficial engagement. Ethical considerations play a significant role, requiring journalists to navigate issues such as stereotypes, misinformation, and harmful narratives when incorporating memes into their reporting. By adhering to these principles, journalists can effectively utilize memes in journalism to engage audiences, convey information creatively, and contribute to informed public discourse while upholding journalistic integrity and ethical standards.

Rationale Of the Study

The study's rationale delves into the critical importance of tracking memes' evolution from basic humor to influential tools in political discourse and social mobilization within mass media. Understanding this evolution is crucial for comprehending how memes shape public opinion, influence societal dynamics, and disrupt traditional journalism practices, highlighting the need for in-depth analysis and ethical considerations in their utilization.

Literature Review

Previous research on memes in mass communication has offered insights into their various roles and aspects (Hakoköngäs et al., 2020). However, there is a scarcity of studies focusing on the evolution of memes from a source of humor to a tool utilized in journalism (Seiffert-Brockmann et al., 2018). This study builds upon existing research by examining the historical context and cultural factors that have shaped the integration of memes into journalism. Dutceac Segesten and Boretta conducted a study specifically exploring social media's impact on electoral campaigns, particularly memes. This study's primary objective is to investigate memes' role in public communication, particularly

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their transition from humor to a journalistic tool (Hakoköngäs et al., 2020). The current research on memes in election campaigns highlights their influence on candidates and their ability to shape public perceptions. Furthermore, this study addresses the lack of research by examining how memes impact the credibility of journalistic standards. Additionally, the study will explore potential challenges and ethical considerations associated with the use of memes in journalism.

Incorporating additional literature that delves into using memes in mass communication can further enrich the discussion. For instance, the study by Riser, Clarke, & Stallworth (2020) examines the influence of scientific memes on social media in disseminating inaccurate information about human development and parenting, highlighting the potential impact of memes on scientific literacy and communication. Additionally, the research by Dean (2019) emphasizes the significance of memes, particularly in digital politics, showcasing how memes have become essential visual communication tools that shape modern political participation and discussions. By including these studies, a more comprehensive exploration of memes' diverse roles and impacts in communication practices can be achieved, providing valuable insights into their evolving significance in contemporary media landscapes.

Novelty Of The Study

The novelty of this research lies in its specific focus on the evolution of memes from being primarily humorous content to becoming a strategic tool utilized in journalism. By examining how memes have transitioned into a form of communication that impacts credibility, coverage depth, dissemination of misinformation, and the exchange of ideas within journalistic practices, this study offers a unique perspective on the role of memes in shaping media landscapes. Furthermore, this research delves deeper into the intricate processes of meme creation, distribution, and consumption within journalism, considering factors such as target audiences, cultural references, and message delivery. These aspects, which have not been extensively explored in previous studies, provide a more comprehensive understanding of how memes are integrated into journalistic content and their effects on communication dynamics. By emphasizing the distinct focus on the incorporation of memes into journalism and its implications for

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communication practices, this research contributes to a nuanced exploration of the evolving significance of memes in mass communication and the ethical considerations associated with their use, presenting a fresh and insightful perspective on this evolving field of study.

Purposes of the Study

This study aims to investigate the transformation of memes from a type of humor to a tool utilized in journalism to scrutinize the utilization of memes in journalism and evaluate their influence on credibility, comprehensiveness of coverage, dissemination of false information, and meaningful exchange of ideas. In addition, this study examines the processes of meme creation, dissemination, and consumption within journalism. It also investigates the potential advantages and disadvantages of integrating memes into journalism and their impact on public perception and the news industry. Furthermore, it analyzes the ethical considerations related to using memes in journalism.

METHODS

The project will comprehensively review existing literature on memes in public communication and journalism. A comprehensive literature study will systematically gather information on the historical evolution of memes in mass communication, their incorporation into journalism, and their influence on journalistic practices and audience reception.

This methodology involves searching, identifying, and evaluating relevant research articles and publications on transforming memes from humor to a tool utilized in journalism. Using the keywords "meme" "memes" "communication" "media" we found 400 articles. After screening 2018–present documents, 305 were picked for relevance and quality. A thematic analysis of analyzed materials revealed key themes and trends in transforming memes from a type of humor to a tool utilized in journalism. Filtering for Social Science and Art Humanities yielded 228 items. Then, after filtering by document type to journal articles, 170 relevant publications were added to the systematic literature review. A preliminary review of the articles' titles and abstracts identified publications relevant to the research questions. This returned 43 relevant

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materials that met inclusion requirements. After that, the remaining 43 relevant documents were carefully examined to determine the transformation of memes from a type of humor to a tool utilized in journalism. After thoroughly examining the texts, 11 articles were selected for in-depth analysis.
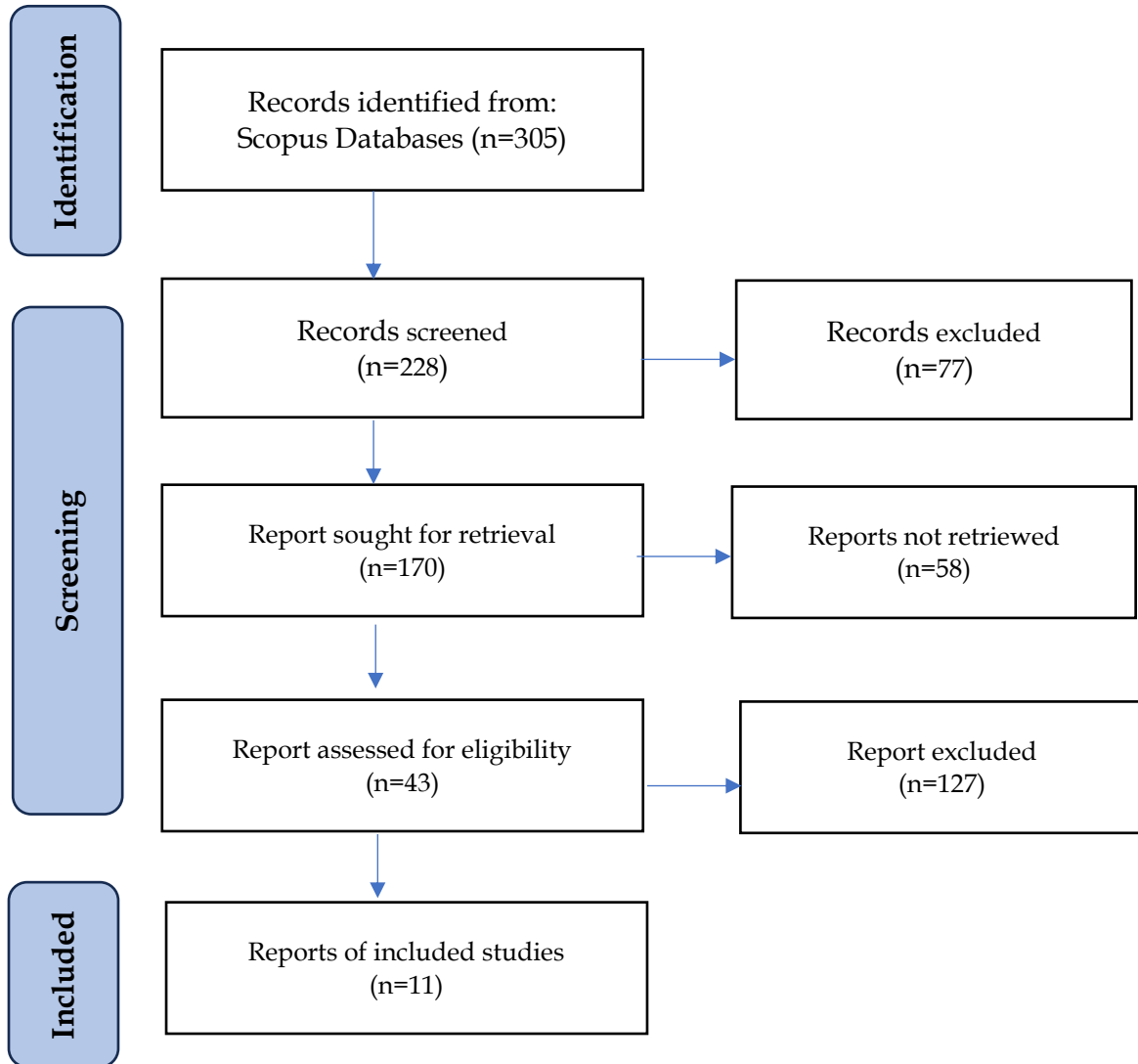

Figure 1. PRISMA Flowchart Of Identification And Selected Studies

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

The research presented in this report offers a detailed summary and explanation of the findings derived from meticulous data extraction and analysis. The study provides a comprehensive exploration of the evolution of memes, transitioning from their initial

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perception as mere humor to becoming a significant tool in journalism. By synthesizing key trends, intricate patterns, and overarching themes identified in the analyzed studies, this report delivers valuable insights into the influence of memes and their integration into journalism.

The report illuminates the transformative journey of memes within the media landscape through a systematic examination of the research findings. By uncovering and elucidating salient trends and patterns, the study underscores the evolving role of memes as they transition from serving primarily as sources of entertainment to becoming essential instruments for communication and information dissemination within journalistic practices. This analysis provides a nuanced understanding of how memes have evolved to shape public discourse, influence societal dynamics, and disrupt traditional journalism norms. The research findings summary discussed in this report are supported by a comprehensive analysis of studies examining the impact of digitization on public service delivery, as shown in Table 1.

These references offer valuable insights into the various functions of memes in public media, encompassing political criticism, persuasion, crisis management, and activism. They provide insight into using memes to communicate ideas, shape public sentiment, and captivate audiences within diverse social and political environments. Besides being vehicles for mass communication, memes also possess the capacity to evoke emotional reactions from viewers.

Memes have a diverse role in mass communication, functioning as potent instruments for transmitting messages, shaping public sentiment, and captivating audiences in many social and political settings. These digital artifacts serve multiple purposes, including political critique, persuasion, crisis communication, and activism. Additionally, they can elicit emotional reactions from viewers (Zulli & Zulli, 2022).

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Table 1. Researches Summary About Impact Of Meme And Digitization On Public Service Delivery

Paper	Study objectives	Methodology	Main findings	Outcome measured
Memes As The Phenomenon Of Modern Digital Culture (Polishchuk, Vitiuk, Kovtun, & Fed, 2020), 13 citations	The study aims to determine why memes are prevalent in modern society and digital culture, examine their most distinctive traits as individual information products in symbolic production, and focus on Internet memes created using and modifying artistic images.	The paper's methodology uses semiotic and hermeneutic analysis to study Internet memes, aiming to explore their popularity and role in contemporary society's symbolic production and exchange.	Internet memes are a new communication and information product in modern digital culture. The study examines their appeal in society and why.	Characteristics and popularity of Internet memes, specifically those created using and modifying artistic images
The Conquest Of The World As Meme: Memetic Visuality And Political Humor In Critiques Of The Hindu Right Wing In India (Baishya, 2021), 9 citations	Examining memes' formal nature and relationship to other visual forms, showing how seemingly frivolous objects can have serious discourse potential, investigating how social media communication has sparked the emergence of a memetic mode of engaging with political culture in India, and how virally fueled	The methodology involves a mix of visual and textual analysis, a survey of virally circulating memes on social media platforms, delineating three distinct modes of memes, mapping out a taxonomy of memetic visuality, and demonstrating the activation of aesthetic-political qualities of	The paper explores the formal nature of memes and their connection to visual forms, introduces the concept of "memetic visuality," and discusses how social media has influenced political engagement through memes.	The "Outcome measured" or the primary outcome measured in the study is the role of memes in political critique and discourse, including their intertextual nature, humor, and impact on public opinion and political culture.

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Paper	Study objectives	Methodology	Main findings	Outcome measured
	parody and satire imbue seemingly non-memetic objects with meme-like qualities.	images in the memetic circulation.		
Boosting Health Campaign Reach And Engagement Through Use Of Social Media Influencers And Memes (Kostygina et al., 2020), 93 citations	According to the study, Twitter posts about truth ® campaigns' content and source affect popularity, support, and reach. The study finds that influencer marketing and shareable content design affect juvenile and young adult campaign reach and engagement. This study examines how these strategies affect campaign appeal in cluttered media.	Tweets were gathered using keyword rules, data was analyzed using machine learning and human coding, irrelevant tweets were eliminated, and tweet valence was classified using a support vector machine (SVM) classifier.	Social influencer campaigns increased reach and engagement by creating more branded and shareable content—influencer marketing targets interested consumers. Social influencers are essential for marketing reach and message propagation.	effectiveness of campaigns utilizing social influencers as message sources in generating campaign-branded and sharable content, increasing the volume of tweets per day, enhancing reach per day, and decreasing oppositional messaging over time
Sorted For Memes And Gifs: Visual Media And Everyday Digital Politics (Dean, 2019), 56 citations	The study addresses social media and digital politics unease, highlights limitations in capturing digitally mediated political participation, and	The methodology involves critiquing existing methodological assumptions in political science regarding social media and digital politics and proposing a	Political science's approach to social media and digital politics is problematic, urging reform to understand them better.	Use of memes and gifs in politically engaged citizens' practices during the 2017 UK General Election

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Paper	Study objectives	Methodology	Main findings	Outcome measured
	challenges broad diagnostic analyses, consequentialist framing of social media, and lack of attention to affective dynamics in politics.	reorientation of the study by incorporating insights from recent media and communication studies literature.	Politically engaged folks produce and share digital visual media daily. Phenomenology can be used to study how citizens experience politics.	
Extending The Internet Meme: Conceptualizing Technological Mimesis And Imitation Publics On The TikTok Platform (Zulli & Zulli, 2022), 177 citations	The study objectives are to critically analyze the TikTok platform, explore how mimesis-imitation and replication are encouraged by the platform's design, and conceptualize TikTok as a memetic text impacting networked publics.	The study employed grounded theory and walkthrough to examine how TikTok's interface affects user behavior and the networked public. The writers created multiple accounts to test TikTok's content modification and platform architecture.	The study demonstrates how TikTok's design fosters user imitation and replication, shaping social interactions and forming an imitation public.	How TikTok's digital structure influences user behavior and shapes networked public
Meaningful Memories and the Art of Resistance (Silvestri, 2018), 23 citations	The study examines Internet memes' rhetorical role as memory actants, memetic responses to affective flashpoints like 9/11, and how memes shape public memory.	Close reading and rhetorical criticism were used to understand the narrative structure and ideological potential of 80 image macros from Know Your Meme's image gallery relating to	Memes play a significant role in challenging norms and promoting civic awareness. - Parodic memes are potent forms of critique. - Memes allow for individual creativity to	Memes' power to alter narratives and affect collective memory is an important role of parody in memes and how online memes express postmodern social memory.

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Paper	Study objectives	Methodology	Main findings	Outcome measured
		the "never forget" and "mission accomplished" memes.	influence and connect with collective expressions.	
Persuasion Through Bitter Humor: Multimodal Discourse Analysis Of Rhetoric In Internet Memes Of Two Far-Right Groups In Finland (Hakoköngäs et al., 2020), 51 citations	The study objectives are to analyze the contents and forms of Internet memes shared by two Finnish far-right groups on Facebook and to investigate the rhetorical functions these memes serve for the groups.	The researchers used multimodal discourse analysis to study Internet memes' contents, forms, and rhetorical intents by familiarizing themselves with the material, taking initial notes, organizing memes into themes, and researching these themes. Six main meme content kinds were found.	Visual images can convey abstract meanings and evoke emotions, memes can spread information and reinterpret news about immigrants and refugees, and far-right groups can use social media language to create a positive in-group identity.	To determine their influence, two Finnish far-right groups' internet memes are examined for content, shape, and rhetoric. This study employs multimodal discourse analysis to discover six meme themes that glorify the past, legitimize nationalist agendas, irritate refugees, and inspire supporters. The study showed that Internet memes help these groups dispute, mobilise, and grow audiences.
#ChokeMeDaddy: A Content Analysis of Memes Related to Choking/ Strangulation	The study objectives are to understand the ideas about sexual choking transmitted through social media memes and	The methodology involved a qualitative content analysis of 316 memes related to choking during sex,	- Women and sexual minorities are particularly affected by sexual choking in adolescents and young	The outcome measured in the paper is the analysis of memes related to choking/strangulation during sex to understand

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Paper	Study objectives	Methodology	Main findings	Outcome measured
During Sex (Herbenick et al., 2023), 8 citations	to conduct a content analysis of memes related to sexual choking to identify common shared categories of interest and messages emerging from the memes.	conducted by an interdisciplinary team of researchers and coded by a diverse group of coders. Memes were collected from various social media platforms, and identifying information was removed from the dataset.	adults. Few consensual sexual choking deaths have occurred. - Young adults under 40 were most likely to choke during their last sexual experience, especially young women.	how they portray and potentially influence perceptions and behaviours related to this sexual practice.
COVID-19 Nationalism And The Visual Construction Of Sovereignty During China's Coronavirus Crisis (Schneider, 2021), 20 citations	The paper examines how government gatekeepers in China imbue their visual creation of a crisis-hit nation with sadness and analyzes the fights over Chinese nation representations, notably national flags and their emotions.	The article examines Chinese COVID-19 pandemic images. Schneider examines how actors used visuals to establish and critique Chinese country representations. Xinmin Weekly covers are examined to discover how visual communication affected crisis perceptions and national response.	The data show how visual representations of China during the COVID-19 epidemic were constructed, distributed, and disputed, producing existential fears and a loss of symbol control by authoritative actors in a highly networked communication context.	The paper measures the impact of visual representations on national identity and sovereignty during the COVID-19 pandemic in China, analyzing how actors used visual cues like national flags to convey messages of nationalism and sovereignty, leading to tensions in networked communication environments.

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Paper	Study objectives	Methodology	Main findings	Outcome measured
By Any Memes Necessary? Small Political Acts, Incidental Exposure And Memes During The 2017 UK General Election (McLoughlin & Southern, 2021), 14 citations	The study objectives are to determine who creates political memes, assess the level of engagement with political memes and who engages with them, and evaluate if any meaningful political information can be derived from memes.	The methodology involved metadata analysis, content analysis, and categorization of memes to understand their reach, creators, content, and impact on political participation and knowledge.	The majority of memes were created by citizens, demonstrating political activity. With nearly half a million shares, memes were popular. Memes lacked policy information, suggesting they won't improve political expertise.	Who creates political memes, what Level of engagement with political memes and who engages with them, Meaningful political information derived from memes
Scientific Memes: Using The Language Of Social Media To Improve Scientific Literacy And Communication In Lifespan Development (Riser et al., 2020), 13 citations	Students are encouraged to create scientific memes with supporting research papers, follow the APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major, and address issues in teaching scientific literacy, writing, and application.	Students used scientific memes on social media following APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major: Version 2.0, resulting in improved learning outcomes and academic performance.	Grades for the scientific meme assignment matched traditional writing tasks in academic rigor, while the completion rate was significantly higher, suggesting greater student engagement.	The paper measured the impact of the scientific meme assignment on student learning by comparing grades and completion rates between traditional writing and meme assignments

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In politics, memes have been widely used to scrutinize political beliefs, rally support, and propagate animosity and aggression. Research has demonstrated the utilization of memes in political campaigns, such as the Hungarian general election, to engage with supporters, shaping identities and impacting views (Bene, 2017). Moreover, memes have been scrutinized within the framework of far-right action, where they are employed to recombine values and disseminate extreme beliefs (Trillò & Shifman, 2021). The deliberate presentation of memes by social movements, such as the German Identitarian Movement, demonstrates how these visual components can promote particular objectives and captivate audiences (Guenther, Ruhrmann, Bischoff, Penzel, & Weber, 2020).

Furthermore, researchers have examined the use of memes in health initiatives, where influencers and meme content are utilized to increase the reach and involvement of the campaign (Kostygina et al., 2020). During times of crisis, such as the COVID-19 epidemic, memes have been examined using rhetorical arena theory and multimodality to gain insight into their underlying implications and interpretive complexities (Pulos, 2020). In the context of vaccination controversies, memes have been utilized by both pro and anti-vaccine groups to apply distinct persuasive strategies to influence public opinion (Harvey, Thompson, Lac, & Coolidge, 2019).

Memes have a far-reaching impact beyond politics and health, affecting many societal matters. Memes have been analyzed within the framework of environmental activism, where they are regarded as legendary narratives that influence perceptions and behaviors in the digital realm (Ardèvol, Martorell, & San-Cornelio, 2021). Within social movements, memes have been examined as instruments of opposition, demonstrating their ability to be used inventively to question prevailing narratives and systems of authority (Boone, Secci, & Gallant, 2018). Moreover, memes have been examined as instantaneous representations of engagement, emphasizing the influence of digital activists in autocratic systems and their effect on political communication (Moreno-Almeida, 2021).

The transition of memes from sources of amusement to catalysts for news dissemination signifies a noteworthy advancement in the field of mass communication. Memes have evolved into instruments for communicating messages, influencing public sentiment, and involving audiences in social and political matters. The shift underscores

the versatility and impact of memes in the era of digital technology, where they have emerged as crucial components in the communication realm (Zulli & Zulli, 2022).

Memes are essential in political communication. Research indicates that memes have a significant role in engaging with followers, shaping identities, and impacting views in electoral campaigns (Bene, 2017). Social movements employ strategic framing of memes to promote particular objectives and effectively capture audiences' attention (Guenther et al., 2020). Memes have also been examined within the framework of the far-right movement, revealing their utilization in recombining principles and disseminating extreme beliefs (Trillò & Shifman, 2021). These examples highlight the wide range of ways in which memes are used in political discussions and activity, demonstrating their capacity to communicate intricate messages graphically.

In addition to politics, memes are also examined in the context of health campaigns, crisis communication, and environmental action. Health efforts employ influencers and meme content to increase the reach and engagement of their campaigns (Kostygina et al., 2020). In crises like the COVID-19 epidemic, memes are examined to comprehend their ramifications and multiple interpretations, emphasizing their influence on public communication (Pulos, 2020). Memes within environmental activism are regarded as legendary narratives shaping people's views and behaviors online. They demonstrate their capacity to inspire and drive social transformation (Ardèvol et al., 2021).

Memes have a substantial emotional influence on audiences. Memes can elicit emotions, including amusement, motivation, frustration, and animosity. Within political contexts, such as electoral campaigns, memes are linked to political influence and manifest antagonistic emotions such as fury (Paz, Mayagoitia-Soria, & González-Aguilar, 2021). Comprehending the impact of memes in engaging audiences and shaping public opinion requires a thorough understanding of the emotional responses they elicit.

Memes As A Tool For Mass Communication

Memes have become a powerful tool for communication, influencing public sentiment, and engaging audiences on various social and political issues. They have been

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utilized for political criticism, persuasion, crisis communication, and activism (Zulli & Zulli, 2022). Memes have the capacity to attract and hold audiences' attention, making them effective instruments for conveying messages. Furthermore, memes have been found to play a significant role in shaping public opinion and contributing to the polarization and fragmentation of the digital public (Paz et al., 2021). They are not merely sources of amusement but also serve as agents in the digital public sphere, influencing public opinion through participatory culture (Baishya, 2021). Additionally, memes have been identified as a form of citizen-initiated political participation, suggesting their potential impact on political discourse and engagement (McLoughlin & Southern, 2021).

Moreover, memes have been used to address serious issues such as health campaigns, with studies indicating their potential to boost campaign reach and engagement through the use of social media influencers and memes (Kostygina et al., 2020). Crisis memes, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, have emerged as a salient part of public discourse, reflecting the societal response to the crisis (Pulos, 2020). Furthermore, memes have been employed for persuasion, with a focus on the role of internet memes in the communication of far-right groups, highlighting their potential for political influence (Hakoköngäs et al., 2020). Additionally, memes have been analyzed in the context of nationalism and the visual construction of sovereignty, demonstrating their role in shaping perceptions and feelings among citizens (Schneider, 2021).

In addition to politics, memes have substantially impacted health campaigns, crisis circumstances like the COVID-19 epidemic, and discussions surrounding vaccinations. Within environmental advocacy, memes are seen as legendary narratives that mold perspectives and impact behaviors in the digital domain. In the field of social movements, memes have been utilized in innovative ways to contest prevailing narratives and power hierarchies. They serve as glimpses of engagement, highlighting the impact of internet activists on shaping political discussions.

The affective impact of memes on audiences is a substantial facet of their influence in mass communication. Memes possess the capacity to elicit a broad spectrum of emotions, encompassing amusement and motivation as well as indignation and

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animosity. The emotional aspect of their work improves their ability to captivate audiences and shape public opinion. Within political situations, such as electoral campaigns, memes frequently have connotations of political influence and manifest antagonistic emotions such as fury. Comprehending the emotional reactions to memes is essential for understanding how they effectively shape public discourse and rally support for particular ideas or politicians.

However, it is important to note that memes are not without controversy. Some memes have been associated with promoting hate, racism, and anti-vaccine sentiments, indicating the potential negative impact of memes on public discourse and attitudes (Al-Natour, 2011; Harvey et al., 2019). The use of memes in the context of authoritarian regimes and their role in reflecting and shaping participation in such regimes has also been studied, shedding light on the complex nature of memes in different sociopolitical contexts (Moreno-Almeida, 2021). Political campaigns have successfully employed memes to engage followers, establish identities, and shape perceptions. Furthermore, the utilization of memes by far-right activists has exemplified their ability to recombine principles and disseminate extremist beliefs. Social movements strategically utilize the framing of memes to promote specific agendas and engage audiences effectively.

Furthermore, memes in health campaigns and crisis communication effectively employ emotional stimuli to connect with audiences. These memes can efficiently communicate significant messages, raise awareness, and elicit specific behavioral reactions by harnessing emotions such as empathy, fear, or hope. Within environmental activism, memes function as symbolic tales that influence perspectives and elicit profound emotional attachments to environmental concerns. Environmental memes can effectively motivate action and organize audiences to advocate for sustainable practices and conservation initiatives by utilizing impactful graphics and relevant themes.

Comprehending the emotional influence of memes reveals their diverse function in widespread communication, ranging from evoking empathy and amusement to initiating essential conversations and catalyzing societal transformation. As memes change, they continue to be powerful instruments for transmitting messages, affecting public opinion, and engaging audiences. Their emotional impact remains vital to their success in dealing with different social and political concerns.

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Memes In The Digital Age: Implications For Journalism

The proliferation of memes in the digital era has resulted in substantial ramifications for journalism. Memes have transformed into a widely embraced mode of consuming content, captivating millions of individuals who actively interact with them on various social media platforms. This phenomenon offers both prospects and difficulties for the field of journalism. Memes, being a visual means of communication, can effectively transmit intricate themes concisely and captivatingly, making them an excellent instrument for storytelling and spreading information. According Zulli & Zulli (2022), memes have significantly impacted the world of politics by promoting widespread sharing and engagement. They effectively convey messages, rally support, and contribute to the division of online public discussions.

Furthermore, memes have been utilized in health campaigns to enhance their reach and engagement by employing influencers and creating shareable content, demonstrating their efficacy in spreading public health messages (Kostygina et al., 2020). The prevalence of memes in contemporary digital culture highlights their extensive impact on online communication and consumption of material (Polishchuk et al., 2020). Memes have been acknowledged for contributing to resistance movements, functioning as instruments for voicing opposition, questioning prevailing narratives, and promoting collective mobilization (Silvestri, 2018).

Within journalism, memes have significantly altered the visual media and everyday digital politics, exerting a profound influence on the consumption and dissemination of information (Dean, 2019). Journalists progressively use memes in their narratives to captivate viewers and communicate intricate concepts in a visually attractive style. Memes have emerged as a dynamic and inventive form of political protest tactics, allowing individuals to articulate their opinions, scrutinize dominant systems of authority, and promote transformative social progress (Boone et al., 2018). The progression of memes in mass communication has compelled journalists to adjust and discover methods to efficiently employ memes as a means of journalistic expression. Currently, they must balance providing fun and educational information while still maintaining accuracy and taking advantage of the viral nature of memes to reach a larger audience.

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The psychological ramifications of memes on individuals and society are crucial factors to consider when examining their impact on mass communication. Memes possess the ability to elicit a broad spectrum of emotions, encompassing feelings of delight and laughter as well as unease and fury. Understanding how memes provoke these emotional reactions can offer valuable insights regarding their efficacy in captivating audiences and influencing public sentiment (Zulli & Zulli, 2022).

The psychological impact of memes on individuals and society is a significant aspect to consider when analyzing their role in mass communication. Memes can evoke a wide range of emotions, from positive feelings like joy and amusement to negative emotions such as discomfort and anger. This emotional diversity plays a crucial role in how memes resonate with audiences and influence public sentiment. By understanding how memes trigger these emotional responses, researchers and communicators can gain valuable insights into their effectiveness in engaging audiences and shaping public opinion. Memes that evoke laughter or delight may be more likely to be shared and go viral, increasing their reach and impact. On the other hand, memes that provoke unease or anger may spark discussions and debates, drawing attention to important issues or viewpoints.

The ability of memes to elicit such varied emotional reactions underscores their effectiveness as a communication tool in capturing audience attention and fostering engagement. By tapping into these emotional triggers, memes can effectively convey messages, convey opinions, and influence public discourse. This understanding of the psychological impact of memes can help communicators craft more compelling and impactful content that resonates with audiences on a deeper level, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of memes in mass communication.

Within politics, memes frequently function as conduits for political manipulation and articulating intense emotions such as indignation and exasperation. They possess the capacity to access the deep-seated emotions of individuals, exerting an impact on their views and attitudes towards political personalities and problems. The affective impact of political memes is essential in influencing public dialogue and rallying backing for particular ideologies or candidates (Elmore & Coleman, 2019; Guenther et al., 2020; Paz et al., 2021).

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In the realm of politics, memes often serve as powerful tools for political manipulation and the expression of intense emotions such as anger, frustration, or outrage. By leveraging humor, satire, or visual elements, political memes can tap into deep-seated emotions within individuals, influencing their perceptions and attitudes toward political figures, issues, or ideologies. This emotional resonance is a crucial aspect of the impact of political memes on public discourse and opinion formation. Political memes have the ability to access and evoke strong emotions in individuals, triggering reactions that can shape their views and beliefs. By articulating sentiments of indignation or exasperation, memes can effectively communicate political messages and critiques succinctly and engagingly. The emotional impact of political memes plays a crucial role in influencing public dialogue, as they have the potential to spark discussions debates, and even mobilize support for specific political agendas or candidates.

Furthermore, the affective impact of political memes extends beyond mere entertainment or humor; they can sway public opinion, reinforce existing beliefs, or challenge dominant narratives. By appealing to emotions and values, political memes can resonate with audiences personally, making them more persuasive and memorable. This emotional connection fosters engagement and can lead to the amplification of certain political viewpoints or the rallying of support for particular ideologies or candidates. In essence, the affective impact of political memes is a fundamental aspect of their role in shaping public discourse and influencing political dynamics. By harnessing emotions and articulating intense feelings through visual and textual elements, political memes have the potential to drive conversations, shape perceptions, and mobilize public support, making them potent instruments for political communication and engagement.

In health campaigns and crisis communication, memes effectively utilize emotional triggers to connect with audiences. These memes can efficiently communicate significant messages, raise awareness, and elicit specific behavioral reactions by harnessing emotions such as empathy, fear, or hope. Memes can establish sympathetic bonds with the audience, amplifying the effectiveness of health education and crisis response initiatives (Kostygina et al., 2020).

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Environmental activism utilizes the emotive influence of memes to motivate action and rally people to support sustainable practices and conservation endeavors. Memes serve as symbolic stories influencing how we perceive things and cultivating solid emotional bonds with environmental concerns. The emotional nature of these messages can elicit a strong sense of urgency and responsibility, motivating individuals to engage in actions that actively promote environmental preservation and sustainability.

Comprehending the psychological effects of memes reveals their diverse function in mass communication, encompassing the ability to evoke empathy and amusement, incite thoughtful conversations, and inspire social transformation. As memes continue developing as powerful instruments for communicating messages, changing public sentiment, and captivating audiences, their emotional impact remains vital in their efficacy across diverse social and political matters.

The emergence of memes in the era of digital technology has had profound consequences for journalism, fundamentally altering the terrain of visual media and online communication. Memes have transformed into a widely embraced mode of consuming content, captivating millions of individuals actively participating with them on various social media platforms. The expanding significance of memes in public discourse and information dissemination poses opportunities and difficulties for journalists.

As a visual medium, memes can effectively transmit intricate messages concisely and captivatingly, therefore serving as a potent instrument for storytelling and spreading knowledge. Journalists progressively use memes in their narratives to captivate viewers and communicate intricate concepts in a visually attractive style. Memes have emerged as a dynamic and inventive form of political protest tactics, empowering individuals to articulate their perspectives, scrutinize systems of authority, and promote transformative societal shifts.

The widespread impact of memes on online communication and content consumption has compelled journalists to adjust and discover practical ways to exploit memes as a means of journalistic expression. Currently, they must balance providing entertaining and educational information while still maintaining accuracy and using the viral potential of memes to reach a broader audience. Given the prominent role that

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memes play in contemporary digital culture and everyday digital politics, it is imperative for journalists to actively seek out inventive and conscientious methods to include memes in their reporting and narrative techniques.

Analyzing The Impact Of Memes On Public Discourse

The concept of memes originated in the 1970s with biologist Richard Dawkins in his book "The Selfish Gene." Dawkins introduced the term "meme" to describe cultural ideas, behaviors, or styles that spread from person to person within a culture. He likened memes to genes, suggesting they replicate and evolve through cultural transmission. Initially, memes were primarily associated with cultural phenomena like fashion trends, catchphrases, or rituals. However, with the rise of the internet and social media, memes have become a new form as digital content is shared and spread rapidly online (Zulli & Zulli, 2022).

In the early days of the internet, simple images with humorous captions, known as "image macros," became popular memes. One of the earliest and most iconic memes is the "Distracted Boyfriend" meme, which gained widespread attention in 2017. As social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram became popular, memes became prevalent in online communication. Memes evolved beyond humor and entertainment to become powerful tools for expressing opinions, critiquing societal norms, and engaging in political discourse (Guenther et al., 2020).

During the initial stages of the meme phenomenon, namely in the early 2000s when internet culture was gaining popularity, memes predominantly consisted of uncomplicated visuals or jokes in text format that were shared on online forums, message boards, and early social media platforms such as MySpace and early versions of Facebook. These initial memes frequently utilized comedy, connections to popular culture, and familiar scenarios to connect with viewers. Among the early manifestations of memes were Advice Animals, Rage Comics, LOLCats, Rickrolling, and the Dancing Baby. These memes were disseminated and propagated rapidly across online forums, email chains, and early social networking sites, facilitating the connection of internet users, sharing inside jokes, and active engagement in a digital subculture. With the evolution of the internet and social media, memes have become increasingly advanced,

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encompassing diverse formats such as picture macros, GIFs, films, and remixes. Memes have evolved from basic jokes to influential instruments for social commentary, political satire, and cultural critique, mirroring the shifting terrain of online communication and digital culture.

Today, memes encompass many formats, including image macros, GIFs, videos, and text-based memes. They are used not only for entertainment but also for social commentary, activism, and marketing. The history of memes reflects the evolution of digital culture and communication, showcasing how ideas and messages can spread virally and shape public discourse online. Memes have become a significant aspect of contemporary communication, influencing how we interact, share information, and engage with current events.

Examining the influence of memes on public discourse is essential for comprehending how these digital artifacts mold conversations, sway viewpoints and mirror society dynamics. Memes have emerged as a dominant form of communication in the Internet era, exerting a substantial influence across multiple spheres, including politics, social movements, health initiatives, and activism. By analyzing the offered references, we can understand the diverse influence of memes on public discourse.

Scholarly literature has extensively tracked the evolution of memes as instruments for social criticism, political satire, and cultural critique. Memes have evolved from light-hearted jokes to powerful instruments for expression, interaction, and communication on various online venues. The rise in popularity of social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram has made this shift easier by creating an environment that has allowed memes to develop into practical tools for social issue awareness, authority criticism, and political satire.

Additionally, a great deal of research has been done on the use of memes in far-right activism, political humor in attacks on India's Hindu right wing, and the use of memetic images in political campaigns like the Bolsonaro campaign to legitimize hate speech and acts of political (Baishya, 2021; Fernández-Villanueva & Bayarri-Toscano, 2021; Moreno-Almeida, 2021). These studies demonstrate how diverse and powerful memes influence political discourse, subvert cultural norms, and promote social change.

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Furthermore, memes' educational and societal value is highlighted by their use in critical media literacy, especially when examining political memes to enhance critical literacy among middle school students. Studies have examined the function of memes as records of involvement in authoritarian governments and their impact on amateur digital activism, providing insight into their function in social criticism and analysis (Moreno-Almeida, 2021).

Zulli & Zulli (2022) examine the idea of technological mimesis and imitation publics on the TikTok platform, emphasizing the role of memetic characteristics in generating imitation publics. This study shows the influential role of memes in altering social interactions and public participation on digital platforms. Paz et al. (2021) examine how political memes contribute to the polarization and fragmentation of the digital public sphere. This research highlights the ability of memes to strengthen pre-existing ideological conflicts and shape public discourse and views, as demonstrated through the analysis of Spanish political memes.

The research by Hakoköngäs, Halmesvaara, & Sakki (2020) investigates the influential impact of internet memes employed by far-right factions in Finland. The research emphasizes memes as a communication that can impact public opinion and shape online discussions. The study provides vital insights into the impact of memes on shaping narratives and affecting views inside the digital world, namely in the communication methods of far-right groups. Riser et al. (2020) examine the influence of scientific memes on social media in disseminating harmful assumptions about human development and parenting. This study emphasizes disseminating inaccurate information through memes and the resulting impact on scientific literacy and communication (Hakoköngäs et al., 2020; Riser et al., 2020).

Studies by Riser et al. (2020), Hakoköngäs, Halmesvaara, & Sakki (2020), Paz et al. (2021), and Zulli & Zulli (2022) highlight the profound influence of memes on a range of topics related to public discourse and digital communication, in their analysis of imitation publics and technical mimesis on TikTok. Zulli & Zulli (2022) show how memetic traits are essential for creating imitation publics, changing social dynamics, and affecting public engagement on digital platforms. This demonstrates how memes may change the way people interact online and how communities function. On the other

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hand, the study conducted by Paz et al. (2021) explores how political memes contribute to the division and polarization of the online public space. The examination of political memes in Spain shows that political memes have the power to shape public discourse and reinforce pre-existing ideological disputes, which in turn can affect public opinions and attitudes.

Moreover, Hakoköngäs, Halmesvaara, & Sakki's (2020) research highlights the communicative potential of memes in forming narratives, swaying public opinion, and influencing online conversations. The study focused on the influence of internet memes utilized by far-right factions in Finland. This study offers insightful information about how memes can influence public opinion and help shape opinions online, especially regarding far-right communication tactics. Furthermore, Riser et al. (2020) analyze scientific memes on social media and draw attention to the consequences of scientific literacy, communication, and the spread of false information via memes. This study highlights how detrimental beliefs about human development and parenting can be perpetuated by scientific memes, underscoring the significance of adequately assessing the content and impact of memes in online forums.

A comprehensive analysis of the studies by Zulli & Zulli (2022); Paz et al. (2021); Hakoköngäs, Halmesvaara, & Sakki (2020); and Riser et al. (2020) reveals essential considerations. These studies, focusing on specific contexts such as technological mimesis on TikTok, political memes, far-right factions in Finland, and scientific memes, provide detailed insights but may lack generalizability to broader settings. It is challenging to establish causal relationships between meme usage and its effects on public opinion, social interactions, and communication dynamics, as correlations are highlighted without definitive causality. Interpretation bias in analyzing memes, particularly in politically charged contexts, could influence conclusions drawn, emphasizing the need for methodological rigor and diverse perspectives. Ethical implications of meme creation, dissemination, and impact, especially regarding misinformation and public opinion manipulation, require further exploration. While the studies offer valuable insights, addressing issues of generalizability, causality, bias, ethics, and broader implications can enrich our understanding of memes' role in digital communication and public discourse.

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Dean (2019) examines the significance of visual media, specifically memes, in digital politics. It highlights the increasing influence of memes on the behaviors and engagements of politically active individuals. He emphasizes the importance of memes as essential visual communication tools that considerably influence modern political participation and discussion. This underscores visual media's role in shaping politically engaged individuals' opinions and actions in the digital era. Political scientists must acknowledge the importance of digital visual media as a crucial part of the daily activities of politically active citizens (Dean, 2019).

The development of memes in mass communication mirrors the shifting dynamics of public discourse. Memes, once considered simply jests or sources of amusement, have evolved into a potent instrument for influencing public participation, forming political storylines, and even propagating false information inside the digital realm. The importance of precise weather predictions in shaping social connections and public participation on digital platforms must be balanced in today's fast-paced environment. Memes have emerged as a means of political engagement initiated by citizens, enabling individuals to actively participate in political matters and influence public sentiment.

Integrating memes into journalism is a multifaceted development impacted by a convergence of causes. The media landscape has been altered by digital revolution and technical breakthroughs, leading journalists to adjust to new methods of information delivery. Due to their visually captivating and easily distributable characteristics, memes have carved out a specific place in the online realm. This enables journalists to interact with audiences creatively and expand their reach to a broader range of people through social media platforms. This adaption is a deliberate reaction to changing audience preferences and engagement tactics, especially among younger populations attracted to interactive and visually captivating material.

Furthermore, memes significantly enhance journalistic reporting by providing cultural relevance and contextualization. Journalists can enhance their storytelling by incorporating current events, popular culture references, and sociological trends, adding comedy, relatability, and a novel viewpoint to intricate matters. Memes function as a means of establishing a connection with audiences at a cultural level, enhancing the

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accessibility and engagement of news material among varied groups of the public with differing levels of media literacy.

Furthermore, in a highly competitive media landscape, memes in journalism serve as a means of differentiating and defining a brand's identity. Journalists use memes to display their organization's personality, values, and editorial position, establishing a unique brand voice that connects with viewers. Journalists can cultivate genuineness, confidence, and viewer allegiance by using memes in their work, distinguishing themselves from conventional news sources.

Furthermore, memes have become a powerful tool for expressing social and political opinions. They allow journalists to simplify complicated topics into easily understandable formats that generate discussions and influence public views. Although memes provide a means of expressing thoughts and criticizing current events, it is important to negotiate ethical concerns related to bias, ignorance, and polarization in political discussions with caution. Incorporating memes into journalistic narratives is a deliberate response to the changing media landscape. It allows journalists to adjust, interact, and establish connections with audiences in a significant and influential manner in the digital era.

The shift towards integrating memes into journalism is a nuanced process influenced by a combination of interconnected factors. The digital transformation has revolutionized media consumption habits, prompting journalists to leverage memes as visually captivating and shareable content to engage with digital-native audiences effectively. This strategic adaptation aligns with evolving audience preferences for interactive and visually stimulating content, enhancing audience reach and interaction in the competitive digital landscape. Furthermore, the cultural relevance of memes plays a pivotal role in journalistic storytelling, allowing journalists to contextualize news stories, connect with audiences on a cultural level, and differentiate their brand identity. Journalists infuse their narratives with humor, relatability, and a fresh perspective by tapping into current events and societal trends, making news content more accessible and engaging across diverse demographic segments.

Moreover, memes serve as a powerful medium for social and political commentary, enabling journalists to distill complex issues into digestible formats that

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spark conversations and shape public opinion. However, the ethical considerations surrounding using memes for political messaging, such as bias, misinformation, and polarization, necessitate careful navigation to maintain journalistic integrity and credibility. Journalists must balance the potential impact of memes on public discourse with ethical responsibilities to uphold journalistic standards and foster informed dialogue.

Additionally, the interactive nature of memes fosters audience participation and storytelling innovation, creating a sense of community and interaction around journalistic content. By incorporating memes into their storytelling repertoire, journalists enhance audience engagement, simplify complex information, and create a more immersive and relatable experience for readers. This strategic adaptation to technological advancements underscores journalists' ability to stay relevant in the digital age, connect with audiences innovatively, and amplify their journalistic content's impact through visually compelling and emotionally resonant storytelling techniques. In essence, the convergence of digital transformation, cultural relevance, social and political commentary, ethical considerations, audience participation, and storytelling innovation collectively drives the shift toward using memes in journalism. By navigating these factors thoughtfully and strategically, journalists can harness the power of memes to engage audiences, shape public discourse, and uphold journalistic integrity in the dynamic and evolving media landscape.

The proliferation of many factors contributes to the growing utilization of memes in journalism. The digital transition has fundamentally changed how people consume and share information. As a result, memes, with their visually appealing and easily shareable nature, have become a perfect match for captivating modern audiences. Furthermore, memes frequently draw upon cultural allusions and contemporary occurrences, rendering them culturally pertinent and facilitating journalists' ability to establish a profound connection with audiences. The cultural significance of this strengthens the art of storytelling and enables journalists to distinguish their brand identity in a saturated media environment.

Furthermore, memes function as a potent instrument for social and political critique, enabling journalists to condense intricate matters into easily comprehensible

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formats that ignite discussions and shape public sentiment. Nevertheless, employing memes to address serious subjects necessitates meticulous ethical deliberation to guarantee precision, impartiality, and the prevention of disinformation or prejudice. By carefully addressing these ethical considerations, journalists can preserve their reputation and support the principles of journalistic integrity while utilizing memes to engage audiences and influence public discourse effectively.

Moreover, the interactive character of memes promotes audience involvement, generating a sense of community and enhancing engagement with journalistic content. By integrating memes into their narrative techniques, journalists can augment audience engagement, streamline intricate material, and foster a more immersive and engaging encounter for readers. This novel narrative method not only enthralls viewers but also enables journalists to access a broader range of people and establish connections with varied populace elements.

By skillfully maneuvering the interaction between digital transformation, cultural significance, social and political analysis, ethical deliberations, audience involvement, and narrative advancement, journalists can utilize memes to captivate audiences actively, influence public conversation, and maintain journalistic principles in the current dynamic and constantly changing media environment. By embracing memes as a means of communication and storytelling, journalists can effectively adjust to evolving audience tastes, establish connections with various demographic groups, and significantly influence the digital era.

Ethical Considerations In The Use Of Memes By Journalists

Ethical considerations are paramount when journalists include memes in their reporting and communication techniques. Memes, an essential component of Internet communication, are susceptible to manipulation or misinterpretation, giving rise to problems over the veracity and impartiality of the given information (Zulli & Zulli, 2022). Journalists must be cautious in using memes to ensure they adhere to ethical standards of accuracy, impartiality, and objectivity in their reporting (Rieger & Klimmt, 2019). Furthermore, users must consider the potential consequences of memes on

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persons or groups that may be specifically targeted or damaged due to using comedic or satirical material (Bene, 2017).

The incorporation of memes into journalism requires a thorough assessment of the content that is being disseminated. Memes possess significant potential as influential instruments in changing public opinion and impacting discourse. Consequently, it is imperative for journalists to carefully contemplate the ramifications of the messages they communicate using memes (Kostygina et al., 2020). Memes possess socio-cultural and political importance, and their utilization can either perpetuate stereotypes and hate speech or facilitate meaningful conversation and involvement (Paz et al., 2021). Journalists must skillfully negotiate the intricacies of meme usage to avoid unintentionally perpetuating detrimental narratives or ideologies (Herbenick et al., 2023).

Moreover, the widespread dissemination and influence of memes emphasize the importance of practicing responsible journalism (Trillò & Shifman, 2021). Memes can impact political communication, social movements, and public health initiatives, underscoring the significance of ethical issues in their use (Hakoköngäs et al., 2020). Journalists must know the potential repercussions of spreading memes, mainly about political polarization, social activity, and cultural representation (Pulos, 2020). Journalists can cultivate a more knowledgeable and inclusive media environment by practicing ethical responsibility in using memes. They can enhance public discourse by captivating viewers through accessible and visually captivating methods while adhering to the values of journalistic ethics and following standards of accuracy, fairness, and neutrality.

Journalists who use memes in their reporting must adhere to the values of accuracy, fairness, and objectivity. Journalists can uphold their credibility and earn the trust of their audience by adhering to ethical principles when using memes (Rieger & Klimmt, 2019). Memes possess significant potential as instruments for communicating messages, although journalists must exercise caution regarding the potential ramifications of the content they disseminate. Ensuring that memes do not spread stereotypes, disinformation, or harmful narratives is of utmost importance from an ethical standpoint (Kostygina et al., 2020).

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Furthermore, journalists can enhance the inclusivity of the media environment by utilizing memes, which can effectively engage a wide range of audiences and stimulate discussions on significant social and political matters (Paz et al., 2021). Memes can bridge communication gaps and ignite discussions among diverse demographic groups (Herbenick et al., 2023). Journalists may foster engagement and collaboration through the responsible utilization of memes, resulting in a more vibrant and inclusive media environment.

Memes significantly impact multiple aspects of contemporary culture, going beyond just amusing. They have infiltrated and influenced public discussions, molded people's viewpoints, and mirrored the dynamics of society. As mentioned, the research elucidates memes' transformative essence as significant conduits for changing social interactions and public participation on digital platforms. The study by Zulli & Zulli (2022) emphasizes memes' significant role in shaping imitation public and their influence on digital communication. The research examines the impact of technological mimesis and imitation publics on the TikTok platform. It offers vital insights into how memes influence public discourse and the dynamics of online interactions.

Paz et al. (2021) investigate how political memes contribute to the polarization and fragmentation of the digital public. They emphasize the considerable importance of memes in strengthening existing ideological disputes and changing public views. This research offers a persuasive comprehension of the influence of political memes on the digital public realm and societal dynamics. The study conducted by Paz et al. (2021) delves into the intricate role of political memes in shaping the digital public sphere, mainly focusing on their contribution to polarization and fragmentation. By emphasizing the significant importance of memes in reinforcing existing ideological disputes and influencing public perspectives, the research sheds light on the profound impact of political memes on the dynamics of the digital public realm and societal interactions. The analysis conducted by Paz et al. (2021) underscores how political memes serve as potent tools that reflect and actively shape public discourse and opinions within the digital space. By amplifying ideological differences and contributing to polarization, these memes play a pivotal role in influencing the formation of distinct online communities and reinforcing pre-existing divisions. The study's findings

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highlight the persuasive nature of political memes in altering public views and attitudes, thereby illustrating their substantial influence on societal dynamics.

Hakoköngäs, Halmesvaara, & Sakki (2020) have examined the impact of online memes on public opinion and virtual discussions, particularly in the context of far-right groups in Finland. Their research sheds light on the persuasive abilities of these memes and their role in shaping public discourse. This study highlights the distinct ability of memes to affect stories and shape people's views online, emphasizing their essential role in affecting public conversations and societal interactions. The research conducted by Hakoköngäs, Halmesvaara, & Sakki (2020) examines the influence of online memes, specifically within the context of far-right groups in Finland, on public opinion and virtual discussions. By shedding light on the persuasive capabilities of these memes and their impact on shaping public discourse, the study underscores the significant role that memes play in influencing societal interactions and public conversations. One key aspect highlighted in the study is the distinct ability of memes to affect narratives and shape individuals' views online. By analyzing the impact of memes within the far-right group context, the research reveals how these visual and textual elements can serve as powerful tools for conveying messages, influencing opinions, and shaping the discourse within online communities. This emphasizes the essential role that memes play in not only reflecting but actively participating in the construction of narratives and the formation of public perceptions.

Riser et al. (2020)'s examination of scientific memes underscores the capacity for disseminating misinformation and the significance of scientific literacy and communication. This demonstrates even more how complex memes affect public conversation and the spread of knowledge.

The ethical implications of using memes in journalism reporting and communication strategies must be carefully considered. To ensure adherence to the ethical standards of accuracy, objectivity, and neutrality in media, journalists must closely monitor the use of memes, as highlighted by Rieger & Klimmt (2019). The ethical obligation of journalists to use memes leads to a media environment that is more knowledgeable and inclusive. It encourages active involvement with various people and stimulates discussions on crucial social and political matters. Journalists can foster

engagement and collaboration by responsibly utilizing memes, resulting in a more vibrant and all-encompassing media environment.

The study's limitations on using memes in journalism provide valuable insights for future researchers to improve the caliber and breadth of their investigations. Firstly, a limited sample size or a particular emphasis may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future researchers should consider using broader and more diverse samples to ensure that their conclusions may be used across multiple situations. Furthermore, methodological limitations, such as the exclusive use of a single research technique or data-gathering method, can restrict the extent to which we can comprehend the phenomenon. Future research could be enhanced by utilizing mixed-method approaches or different methodologies to capture the complex nature of meme usage in journalism fully.

Furthermore, temporal relevance emphasizes the rapid nature of digital media and meme culture, indicating the necessity for long-term research or regular evaluations to monitor trends and shifts in the use of memes in journalism. Ethical issues, an additional significant constraint, emphasize the necessity of prioritizing ethical norms and considerations in the design and execution of research to guarantee the responsible and respectful utilization of memes in journalistic contexts. The presence of biases and subjectivity in data processing may have an adverse effect on the credibility of study findings. This highlights the significance of applying strategies to reduce bias and improve the reliability of research outputs.

Moreover, suppose contextual elements are not properly dealt with. In that case, they can result in overlooking the broader effects of shaping memes in journalism, including cultural norms, technical improvements, and industrial dynamics. In order to conduct a more thorough and detailed analysis of the intricacies surrounding the integration of memes in journalistic practices, future researchers should include these contextual aspects in their study designs. Researchers can enhance their methodology, broaden their studies, and contribute to a more comprehensive and insightful body of knowledge on the influence of memes in modern journalism by recognizing and tackling these limitations.

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CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

The conclusions drawn from the study on the evolution of memes in mass communication align closely with the initial problem formulation and research objectives. The research explored how memes have transitioned from simple jokes to influential tools shaping public opinion and societal dynamics in journalism. The study successfully highlighted the significant impact of memes on public discourse, societal interactions, and the role of journalists in utilizing memes responsibly.

The findings underscored the need for journalists to navigate the complexities of meme usage with caution, ensuring that reporting values of accuracy, impartiality, and objectivity are maintained. By addressing ethical concerns associated with the incorporation of memes in journalism, journalists can cultivate a more knowledgeable and inclusive media atmosphere while upholding their reputation and trust with the audience. The study emphasized the importance of continuously scrutinizing meme utilization in reporting to comprehend potential consequences and ethical challenges linked to their integration.

Furthermore, the conclusions emphasized the evolving role of memes in digital communication and their substantial impact on public discourse, societal dynamics, and the shaping of public opinion. By acknowledging the ethical considerations and potential ramifications of meme usage, individuals can actively participate in a media environment characterized by constant change and innovation. The study's insights provide valuable suggestions for future researchers to enhance the quality and breadth of investigations by considering broader samples, diverse methodologies, and long-term evaluations to monitor trends in meme usage in journalism.

In conclusion, the study effectively addressed the problem formulation by highlighting the transformative role of memes in mass communication, aligning with the research objectives of exploring their influence on public discourse and journalistic practices. The recommendations for improvements in future research underscore the need for a comprehensive understanding of meme usage in journalism, considering ethical norms, cultural dynamics, and technological advancements to navigate the evolving landscape of digital communication effectively.

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Suggestion

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that a thorough examination of memes in journalistic reporting be conducted to consider the ethical consequences of meme usage and investigate the lasting impact of memes on public opinion. The future study should prioritize the development of norms and quality criteria for using memes in journalism. Furthermore, conducting a thorough inquiry into the strategies that prove to be efficacious in combating the dissemination of deceit through memes is imperative.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

This research is the outcome of unrestricted and autonomous academic investigation and is unaffected by conflicts of interest. Overall, the progression of memes in mass communication has converted them from basic humor into influential instruments for transmitting ideas, molding perspectives, and involving varied audiences in significant dialogues.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The authors affirm that they have no potential conflicts of interest with this paper's research, writing, and/or publication.

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