INDONESIAN GENERATION Z'S PERSPECTIVE ON MEMES AS A REPRESENTATION OF THEIR COMMUNICATION ON MEDIA SOCIAL

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ABSTRACT

Background: In this digital era, memes have changed the way Indonesian generation z communicates on social media. **Purpose:** To find out Generation Z's perspective on using memes and how they communicate on social media. Question: How do memes affect the way Indonesian generation z communicates on social media? **Methods:** We used online surveys for quantitative methods with data analysis using descriptive statistical techniques and interviews for qualitative methods with purposive sampling technique. The population is Generation Z, with the age range being 17-23 years and over. Our respondent in an online survey is 72 respondents and took 6 of them for an interview. **Results:** We found that memes have positive and negative effects on the way Indonesian generation z communicates on the Whatsapp, Instagram, Twitter, Line, and Telegram platforms used for various purposes such as conveying information, opinions, criticism, entertainment, and breaking the tense atmosphere. **Recommendation:** We recommend adding respondents to achieve generalization so that the data obtained is more valid than this. **Limitations:** The limitation of our research is that the respondents involved are mostly from East Java.

Keywords: Meme, Communication, Social Media, Indonesian Generation Z

I. INTRODUCTION

Generation Z is a generation which is born from 2001 to 2010. They exist after the millennial generation. Generation Z was born in the digital world with complete technology such as personal computers (PCs), mobile phones, gaming devices, and the internet. They spend most of their time surfing the web, preferring to stay indoors and play online rather than going out and playing outdoors (47). Their action appears to have some negative impact on the use of social media because of its excessive use and lack of respect for the surrounding environment (23).

Dawkins introduced memes as ideas, behaviors, styles that spread from one person to another (32). The meme consists of verbal and visual. Verbal/written memes usually consist of monologues or dialogues, while visual memes consist of pictures, photos, and emoticons. A meme that initially only consisted of images and text has already developed in moving things such as animated GIFs, stickers, and even in the form of audio-visual or short videos (7). Meme pictures and writings are usually funny, unique, and inviting laughter when read by people.

The development of communication technology gave rise to new media. One of them is social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Messenger (12). The communication process through communication media is increasingly sophisticated because of sophisticated features. Communication on social media often uses standard language because our communication opponents are often unknown for their identities in cyberspace though we have interacted and met in the real world. The official language used on social media is few, and almost no social media users write statuses according to the Enhanced Spelling. In contrast, formal writing is important because it is related to ethics in communicating with fellow social media users (29).

One of the communication strategies often used by millennials on social media is the meme. The interaction of using memes on social media changes the way of communicating among generation Z. Meme language, such as verbal and non-verbal language, allows millennials to present inadequate and inappropriate ways of communicating that will exacerbate hostility and prejudice against certain people, gender, religion, and others (31).

Therefore, this research is vital to find out the perspective of Generation Z on the use of memes and changes in the way Generation Z communicates as meme users on social media to prevent misunderstandings or controversies that can divide society. Based on the problems, we formulate a question "How do memes affect the way generation z communicates on social media?"

II. RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, researchers used two approaches: quantitative approach with online survey method and qualitative approach with interview method. Kerlinger (43) stated that survey research is research whose data comes from a sample of a particular population that produces relative events, distribution, and correlations between sociological or psychological variables. By that, this research aims to collect information about the perspective of Generation Z on memes as a communication alternative in social media. Our respondent population is Generation Z, aged 17-23 years and over. They come from various regions in Indonesia, mostly East Java.

The sampling method that we use to take the sample from the population is the purposive sampling method. With this method, we select the research samples according to predetermined criteria. Thus, we took 72 people as survey respondents, and 6 of them were selected as interviewees to give further information about the related topic. The following is demographic data from our participants.

Table 2.1 Demographic Data

Occupation	Total	Percentage
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College Student	60	83,3%
Employee	6	8,3%
College Student as Part-timer	2	2,8%
Student	2	2,8%
Housewife	1	1,4%
Private employee	1	1,4%

There are several stages for collecting research data in this study. First, researchers prepared several questions related to the topic discussed. The questions in the survey were made based on the result of the researchers' discussions by exploring things related to the topic. Second, the researchers created Google Forms to distribute questionnaires and collect data. Third, researchers began distributing the form to respondents who fit the criteria as research subjects: Indonesian citizens aged 17-23 years and over. Fourth, researchers collected the data recorded in Google Forms in a week. Fifth, the researchers contacted several respondents who filled out the survey to ask about their willingness to participate in the interviews. Sixth, researchers conducted the interviews with the aim of matching and corroborating survey data from respondents. Seventh, the results of the interviews were recapitulated in the form of text. Eighth, with the existing survey and interview data, the researchers analyzed the data using a predetermined method.

To test the validity of the research instrument, researchers conducted validity and reliability tests. Validity measurement is used to find the accuracy and similarity between the factual data and the data obtained based on the research. This measurement aims to prove whether the researchers' instrument can reach valid data or not. Researchers also measured the reliability of the research instrument. Reliability measurement is used to determine whether this instrument can be used and can be trusted. According to Sugiyono (3), the reliability test is conducted to determine the extent to which the results of the measurements remain the same and consistent when measured repeatedly using the same instrument.

To analyze the collected data, researchers used the descriptive statistical method. The data analysis process starts from analyzing each answer, then the main answers that have been grouped are presented in tables and diagrams. The following is the research process flowchart.

Figure 2.1 Research Process Flowchart

III. RESULTS

Social media is a place where everyone can reach a wide area and spread information quickly. Millions of people are familiar with using social media in various forms of existing platforms. Several platforms are used to spreading memes, tagging, and even creating them. This survey has collected 72 respondents aged 17-23 and above who actively use social media consisting of various platforms.

Of course, because social media now has various platforms with various advanced features, we have compiled the platforms that respondents use to communicate with memes.

Table 3.1 Platform used to use the meme

Platform	Total	Percentage of Platforms Used by Respondents
Instagram	8	11,1%
WhatsApp	36	50%
Twitter	19	26,4%
LINE	1	1,4%

Facebook	2	2,8%
Others (Telegram, save in gallery, all platform)	4	5,3%
Not Using Meme	2	3%

Various platforms are used to spread memes, and of course, memes have different functions for everyone. Some of the functions are based on the results of the answers from respondents that we will present in the form of a table as follows.

Tabel 3.2 Memes Function

Question	Answer
What do you think memes do?	<p>Some summary of respondents' answers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Break the tense atmosphere 2. Jokes 3. express feelings/situation 4. Criticizing social phenomenon 5. Satire 6. Entertainment 7. Submission of ideas/behaviors 8. Convey message/advice/information 9. Sarcasm 10. Chatter 11. Delivery of knowledge 12. Promotion 13. Communication media 14. Motivation 15. Information falsification tool

The usage of a meme in social media has various functions, but is there a relationship between memes and how to communicate in social media? 94.4% of respondents answered "Yes," while 5.6% of respondents chose to answer "No." We also get various opinions about the positive and negative impact of using memes related to communicating.

Figure 3.1 Presentation of survey results on the impact of using memes by coding network

Additionally, according to our interview, we conclude that a meme is an image and text that is structured to convey a message from a social phenomenon and express the expression of its users. The informants also argued that memes were associated with the way they communicated. With the initials Na and F, two of them said that communication occurs when the sender and receiver of the meme understand the context of the meme. Other informants associated memes with communicating the influence and usefulness of memes in everyday life. The platforms used by the informants include Whatsapp, Twitter, Instagram, and Telegram. On Whatsapp, they use memes as a joke, to lighten the mood, to represent emotions, as a medium to convey messages about a phenomenon. Apart from Whatsapp, several sources claimed to have received memes from Twitter. Memes on Twitter are used to convey satire and jokes to their mutuals.

Meanwhile, on other platforms such as Instagram and Telegram, memes are not much different from memes on the Instagram and Twitter platforms. In addition to the function of memes, the interviewees also explained the influence of memes on themselves and others. According to the informants, the positive impact is that memes can strengthen relationships with friends, influence their way of communicating to be more to the point, and entertain

themselves and others. As for the negative impact, they explained that someone could feel offended by the memes sent. Memes can also lead to disputes and misunderstandings due to different understandings of the context. In addition, according to one of the sources, ethics in communication has also decreased because it is not uncommon to find inappropriate words in these memes, especially among children.

IV. DISCUSSION

a. The perspective of Generation Z on the use of memes in social media

Generation Z, who in their lives cannot be separated from the internet, certainly knows well that social media functions as a means of communication in cyberspace (13). Social media makes it easy for them to stay connected without any limitations of space and time. Many ways can be applied to communicate on social media. One of them that is often used nowadays is by using memes. Generation Z considers a meme as a funny picture or video with texts representing an idea, state, behavior, or expression of a person in response to a specific event. In other words, memes can be an alternative to communicate because of various expressions in memes that can represent something about what people want to convey. Memes also can make it easier for them, the meme users, to convey without explaining the further meaning of the meme context. Therefore, meme content can be understood by every internet user, regardless of age, language, culture, and nation (31). It can be seen from a diagram below that most Gen Z think that there is a link between memes and the way they communicate, namely as a medium for interacting.

Diagram 4.1 The relationship between memes and how to communicate

b. The Application of Memes in Communication on Social Media

Social media is one of the results of technological advances that have changed the way people communicate today. They will share what they see and find out in social media, like the many things obtained from social media and make them aware of the various issues (37). A meme is a medium presented visually and can lead someone to be aware of the issues. No longer just a joke, memes have various functions on various platforms in the cyber world.

Diagram 4.2 Meme sharing platform

The diagram shows that the platforms most often used by Gen Z to spread memes are Whatsapp, Instagram, Line, Facebook, Twitter, and Telegram. The use of memes through these platforms for Generation Z conveys opinions, information, entertainment, criticism and breaks the tense atmosphere. According to Shifman, memes are contained in picture messages that contain humorous content (33). Humor can release humans from stressful and unpleasant things (21). Therefore, funny pictures that invite laughter can melt the atmosphere more relaxed.

In addition, memes are an alternative to efficiently convey detailed information by modifying it through funny images. Because memes are becoming a popular medium today, the information in memes can spread very quickly on social media. Following that phenomenon, netizens found that memes could be a promotional tool. Listiyorini (25) also said that meme content as a marketing strategy could spread quickly and give a distinct impression to the audience in marketing strategies and advertising content. On the other hand, memes can sometimes be misused by their users. Memes can be a tool to spread false information or hoaxes and become a tool to corner other people so that it has the potential to cause disputes.

c. The Effect of Memes on How Generation Z Communicate on Social Media

The way of communicating in the digital era has changed. The use of memes is one of the actions that change communication. Same with the language as a symbol of a symbol or sound that is mutually agreed upon by its use, memes are symbols consisting of stickers, pictures, and videos whose meanings are mutually agreed upon by the users, and the exchange of them influences the communication by Generation Z in interpreting a purpose by the users (7). Then, this symbol has a meaning that fellow users can understand. Communication using memes has become commonplace nowadays. The use of memes is not only for funny material but also for expressing some things such as their emotion, conveying satire, personal matters, or according to the issues that occur. Usually, the language used in memes is slang. Slang is the language used by a particular group of people to communicate. A slang is a symbol or expression of familiarity for its users, which indicates its person is part of a particular community group (14). to clarify the content or context of the meme about a phenomenon in a specific environment, Meme users use slang. Communication culture using memes has become prevalent in society nowadays. Then, it raises some impacts for its users.

In Fact, Generation Z's habits in using memes have positively and negatively influenced them in communicating. The positive influence was the receiver being more sensitive and understanding what the meme sender wanted to convey. This sensitivity made communicating with one another more fun and relaxed because of the feeling of relaxation among each other. It shows that memes can strengthen the relationship and sense of belonging among users (31).

Meanwhile, the negative influence of memes in communication is causing disputes and decreasing communication ethics. The funny appearance of memes turns out to have implications that meme creators want to convey, which are usually satirical or criticizing a phenomenon developing in society (33). The main thing is that language use shows sarcasm and irony, so it allows certain parties to feel offended and misunderstood. Generation Z, who often encounter and use sarcasm memes, will consider it common, so millennials don't hesitate to use it openly both on social media and in the real world. In addition, another negative influence is laziness in stringing words. Generation Z tends to like practical things, so memes are more used for various situations than their own syllables. As a result, Generation Z will finally seem indifferent because they only use memes to respond to particular circumstances.

V. CONCLUSION

In this digital era, millennials, as the users who cannot stay away from social media, consider memes as funny pictures or videos accompanied by writing that represents a person's ideas, circumstances, behavior, or expressions in response to a situation. The influence of Generation Z's communication in social media can be both positive and negative. The positive effect is that millennials feel that memes make the receiver more sensitive and understand the opinions and feelings of the sender or meme creator. While the negative impact is that user ethics decreases because they are indifferent and accustomed to using sentences that are impolite and contain sarcasm which can cause disputes. The application of memes on social media is usually through Whatsapp, Instagram, Twitter, Line, and Telegram used to convey information, opinions, criticism, entertainment and breaking a tense atmosphere. In this research, We recommend adding respondents to achieve generalization so that the data obtained is more valid because the limitation is that the respondents involved are mostly from East Java.

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VII. ATTACHMENT

1. Respondent Age

Umurnya berapa kak?
72 responses

2. Respondent Job

Pekerjaannya apa kak kalo boleh tau?
72 responses

3. Frequency of using Meme

Pernahkah kalian menggunakan meme?
72 responses

4. Meme Application Platform

Di platform mana kalian menggunakan meme?

72 responses

5. Relationship Between Meme and The Way of Communication

Adakah hubungan meme dengan cara berkomunikasi?

72 responses