

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Title of the Study

This research is entitled "An Analysis of Memes and Audience Engagement on Memezar's Instagram Account."

1.2 Background of Study

In the current digital era, social media has fundamentally changed the way people communicate, share information, and express themselves. Communication has shifted from traditional one-way message delivery to interactive, participatory, and network-based communication that takes place online, making social media one of the most influential digital communication tools in everyday life. In this transformation, audiences are no longer passive recipients of messages. Instead, they actively create, modify, and redistribute content, making digital platforms a space for continuous interaction between communicators and audiences.

Among the various social media platforms, Instagram has become one of the main spaces for sharing content in everyday life. As a visually oriented platform, the effectiveness of communication on Instagram depends greatly on the ability to understand content trends and audience preferences, and then turn them into engaging content.

In this context, visual elements such as memes have become one of the popular types of content on various social media platforms. Memes can spread quickly from one person to another through online media and internet connections. The term *meme* comes from the word *mime*, which was used to explain the process of cultural evolution. The term was first introduced by Richard Dawkins in 1976 in his book *The Selfish Gene*. Dawkins defined a meme as a unit of cultural transmission that spreads through imitation, replicates itself, and influences human thoughts and behavior on a broad scale. The concept, which originally came from the study of evolution, later developed into a form of communication that is widely used on social media. The spread of memes was also discussed by Bauckhage

(2011), who stated that memes usually develop through comments, imitation, or parody, and even through news in other media.

Memes are a form of content that can spread easily and can be reproduced, imitated, modified, and distributed across various social media platforms. The spread of memes depends greatly on social media users, who can reshare existing memes and create new versions based on their own interpretations. Memes are also widely used on social media to express feelings, describe social conditions, and respond to or criticize certain social phenomena.

As a form of social media content, the performance of content can be seen from the level of audience engagement it generates. Audience engagement refers to how users respond to and interact with content on social media. Hollebeek et al. (2014) explain that engagement on social media involves cognitive, emotional, and behavioral activities. These activities show how audiences pay attention to content, give emotional responses, and take actions such as liking, commenting, sharing, or reposting content. Audience engagement is an important indicator for understanding audience responses to social media content.

One Instagram account that reflects this phenomenon is Memezar. The account consistently uses memes as its main content by presenting various visual and textual content, ranging from reaction memes to memes based on the latest popular culture trends. Memezar aims to present short and entertaining visual content, build a large online community, make audiences laugh, and create emotional connections that can encourage audience interaction and engagement.

Based on Instagram data, the Memezar account has 23,800,000 followers. Although it has a very large number of followers and consistently uploads meme content, these statistics cannot fully explain how meme characteristics are used to deliver messages to audiences. Quantitative information about the number of followers and interaction levels also does not fully explain how memes are constructed as a form of digital communication or to what extent these characteristics are related to audience engagement.

Although so many research has been conducted on meme in social media, such as Umamah et al. (2023) examined the use of humor in Instagram memes

through their study entitled “Implicature, Technique, and Function of Humor on Instagram Memes.” The study focused on the implicatures, techniques, and functions of humor found in memes posted on Instagram. The findings showed that Instagram memes contain various implied meanings and use different techniques to create humor. The study also found that memes serve several functions in communication. This study is relevant to the present research because both examine memes on Instagram. However, Umamah et al. focused on the linguistic and humorous aspects of memes, while the present study examines meme characteristics based on content, form, and stance and also considers the audience engagement generated by meme posts.

Based on this research gap, this study focuses on how the Memezar Instagram account presents meme content on its Instagram feed and the audience engagement generated by that meme content. Therefore, this study, entitled *"An Analysis of Memes and Audience Engagement on Memezar's Instagram Account,"* aims to analyze the characteristics of the memes published on the Memezar Instagram account. The findings of this study are expected to enrich the literature on internet memes, digital communication, and social media by providing a systematic analysis of meme construction.

1.3 Formulation of the Problem

This study addressed two formulations of the problem, there are:

1. How does Memezar present meme content on its Instagram feed?
2. How is audience engagement of memes posted on Memezar Instagram account based on engagement rate?

1.4 Limitation of the Study

This study examined the memes and audience engagement on the Memezar Instagram account. The study analyzed 17 high-like meme content taken from Memezar’s Instagram feed to identify these memes and analyze audience engagement based on the engagement rate. This study only includes content posted to the Instagram feed and excludes Instagram Stories, Reels, Highlights, or content

from other social media platforms. Furthermore, audience engagement was assessed solely based on Instagram interaction metrics, without examining audience perceptions through interviews or questionnaires. Therefore, the findings of this study are limited to the selected meme posts and cannot be generalized to all meme accounts on social media.

1.5 Objective of the Study

The purposes of this study are:

1. To analyze how Memezar presents meme content on its Instagram feed.
2. To find out audience engagement of memes posted on Memezar Instagram account based on engagement rate.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This research is significance for several groups, such as:

1. Significance for Readers

This study is expected to help readers understand the characteristics of memes on Instagram, as well as audience engagement based on engagement rate.

2. Significance for Students

For students, this research serves as a practical guide to understanding meme and audience engagement in Memezar instagram account. It is hoped that this research will also help students build their careers in media, communication, and marketing.

3. Significance for Future Research

This study is expected to provide a reference for future research on internet memes by using different social media platforms, research objects, or analytical frameworks.