

# The Effect of Meme-Based Learning Material on Generation Z 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Students

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**Abstract.** Memes are growing very broad on the internet and are generally being used to share humorous content. The meme is well-liked by most of generation Z (gen-Z) as a form of entertainment and others. Based on this information, this study attempts to implementing meme on education. This study aims to discover the effect of using meme-based learning material on students of SMAS Panjura Malang, which are divided into three main aspects; (1) learning, (2) content, and (3) function. 15 among 23 students from XI IPS 1 class are chosen as participants by utilizing the purposive sampling method. This study shows that more than 60% students are in favor on all three aspects. However, they thought that memes still require supporting aids to be understood. From these finding, it can be known that implementation meme on class can be considered success, although the problems that may arise are not yet known.

**Keywords:** Meme, learning material, generation z, education.

## 1 Introduction

A meme is something that is already common for gen-Z who spend most of their time on the internet. The existence of meme already started way before gen-Z, and now meme is becoming more popular in their era. Denisova stated that memes are similar to genes in the way they pass cultural information and ideas between individuals and generations [1]. The purpose of memes is generally used to pass humorous content. However, the usage of a meme is not limited to sharing humorous content, memes are also able to be used to express thoughts of what the creator had in mind. Memes can be used as media for ads, politics, marketing, and others. According to Kariko, memes provide a powerful new way to combine a few things such as creativity, art, message, and humor in the internet culture [2].

Gen-Z has various ways of accessing memes, starting from mainstream social media like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Discord, and Reddit, or particular website whose purpose is solely for a meme like 9gag and Indonesian meme website 1cak. They not only enjoy meme content that is provided, but some of them have thought to create and share their version of

memes to express their idea. Most gen-Z who enjoy meme content is generally just using it to humor themselves and waste their time.

In designing a lesson plan, the creation of learning material usually being done neatly according to the standard, containing generic texts and pictures arranged as necessarily possible. Creating learning material according to the standard is not wrong, but a lack of creativity makes the learning material tedious. This is usually causing motivation to study drop-down, which also impacts making students less focused on the lesson. That's why using additional media as a stimulus for students is something that must not be underestimated.

The purpose of this study is to discover the effect of using meme-based learning material on gen-Z students which are divided into three main aspects: (1) learning, (2) content, and (3) function. Scardina stated that while memes are fun to make and share, there can also be educational value in memes [3].

Some studies about memes related to education have been done by other researchers. Salma et al [4] conducted a study about COVID-19 memes as a teaching tool in teaching descriptive text to second-grade junior high schools in SMP 1 Tahunan Jepara. The result shows that usage of meme pictures able to be implemented to teach descriptive text; meme picture success helps students in writing descriptive text, and no problem arises in students who use memes in writing their descriptive text in SMP 1 Tahunan Jepara. Kariko [2] also conducted a study about the usage of an internet meme in humorous writing exercises in English language classes. The study started with analyzing five meme samples in terms of decoding their relation between images, texts, and meanings using semiotics. After the samples were analyzed, a humorous writing exercise is being conducted for college students at BINUS university. The result shows that samples in class 01PAG and 03PBM showed a wide variety of interesting topics that related to everyday life. But in class 01PCG unable to give better results than the two classes from before. The hypothesis from the researcher says that humor and creativity in using internet memes are related to students' GPAs, and smarter students show better results in creating jokes or good humor. Lastly, a study from Mendez-Reguera and Lopez Cabrera [5] conducted a study about involving students gen-Z in using memes on unorthodox assignments in immunology class. The result shows that students can make clever connections using those visual representations which are part of their digital environments, with what was discussed in the classroom. From those previous studies, no studies attempted to use memes as learning material in the lesson. Based on that reason, this study attempted to discover the effect of using meme-based learning material in the lesson.

This study is hoped to be able to discover the advantage of using memes creatively in modern teaching, with the main target gen-Z students.

## **2 Method**

This study is utilizing qualitative research to describe the situation that students felt in lessons with meme-based learning material. Stated by Tracy [6] that qualitative methodology is better than quantitative methodology for richly describing a scene, or for understanding the stories people use to narrate their lives. With a one-shot case study, meme-based learning material is being taught in sophomore class IPS 1 of SMAS Panjura. Among those students in that class, the sample is selected using the purposive sampling method, with consideration that the

sample is selected from those who attended and pay attention thoroughly to the meme-based learning material lesson in Japanese language class. Data is collected through a close-ended questionnaire from the samples, using the Likert scale 1 – 5 model.

The effect being studied is divided into three main aspects, and a breakdown is conducted from each of them. Two indicators are obtained from the learning aspect, which contains delivery of learning material, and absorption of learning material. The content aspect is breakdown into one indicator, which is the relevance of the meme. Lastly, the function aspect is breakdown into two indicators, usage of memes, and the existence of memes.

**Table 1.** Breakdown of three main aspects

	Aspect	Indicator
1.	Learning	Delivery of learning material
		Absorption of learning material
2.	Content	Relevance of meme
3.	Function	Usage of meme
		Existence of meme

After three main aspects are breakdown into five indicators, a total of 12 items are obtained from all five indicators. Those 12 items then go through validation on every each of them. By using expert judgment, experts will check if all items are acceptable or if any revision is needed. Two experts in education are selected as a validator to check all 12 questionnaire items.

**Table 2.** Questionnaire items

Indicator	Item(s)
Delivery of learning material	1. Adjective vocabulary material on <i>Watashi no Machi</i> taught using memes becomes easier to understand.
	2. Adjective vocabulary material on <i>Watashi no Machi</i> taught using memes becomes easier to remember.
Absorption of learning material	3. The memes presented are easy to digest/understand.
	4. The memes presented are relevant to generation Z humor.
Relevance of meme	5. Memes require supporting aids. (Text, oral, etc.)
Usage of meme	6. Memes increase interest and motivation to learn.
	7. Memes affect the mood when studying.
	8. Memes make the adjective vocabulary material in <i>Watashi no Machi</i> look more interesting.
	9. Memes make the delivery of adjective vocabulary material in <i>Watashi no Machi</i> more creative and less boring.
	10. Memes express the adjective vocabulary material in <i>Watashi no Machi</i> in depth, making the material more vivid.
	11. Memes are suitable for modern teaching.
	12. Memes give a beautiful and deep impression in the adjective vocabulary material on <i>Watashi no Machi</i> .
	Existence of meme

### 3 Result and Discussion

#### 3.1 Result

The study was conducted in sophomore class IPS 1 of SMAS Panjura with a population of 23 students in the 2022/2023 academic year. 15 participants were selected with consideration to those who attended and pay attention thoroughly to the meme-based learning material lesson with *Watashi no Machi* as a topic in Japanese language class. Data was collected through an instrument questionnaire utilizing the Google form platform.

First, aspect learning study about how meme able to affect students in term of learning. Serano stated that meme able to be used as device to check for understanding [7].

**Table 3.** Result of response in aspect learning

	Item(s)	Scale				
		1	2	3	4	5
1.	Adjective vocabulary material on <i>Watashi no Machi</i> taught using memes becomes easier to understand.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (33.3%)	3 (20%)	7 (46.7%)
2.	Adjective vocabulary material on <i>Watashi no Machi</i> taught using memes becomes easier to remember.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (40%)	3 (20%)	6 (40%)

According to the sample response in aspect learning, the results show that from two of each item, both show positive responses. The first item which comes from indicator delivery of learning material shows that 10 participants (66.7%) gave a positive response to the item. So, it can be interpreted that learning material from *Watashi no Machi* that taught with meme-based learning material is appropriate helping participants to understand the material easier.

Moving on to the second item which comes from indicator absorption of learning material, it also shows a positive result, which shows that nine participants (60%) gave a positive response to the item. That means learning material from *Watashi no Machi* that taught with meme-based learning material is also appropriate helping participants to remember the material easier.

Second, aspect content study how relevancy the presented meme to the audience (students). A well-placed meme is a conversation piece, and conversation breeds relationships, it also helped to make the concepts more accessible in their minds – less stressful in a way [3], [7]. This meant that this aspect results could determine the effect of other two results.

**Table 4.** Result of response in aspect content

	Item(s)	Scale				
		1	2	3	4	5
3.	The memes presented are easy to digest/understand.	0 (0%)	1 (6.7%)	5 (33.3%)	4 (26.7%)	5 (33.3%)

					%)	
4.	The memes presented are relevant to generation Z humor.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (20%)	6 (40%)	6 (40%)

Aspect content which has indicator relevance of meme, two items were given to the participants, and both of them shows a positive result. From the third item which states about memes that are being presented are easy to understand, nine participants (60%) gave a positive response. From the information given, it can be interpreted that the presented memes are appropriate to the audience.

The fourth item states that memes presented are relevant to gen-Z humor. from that statement, 12 participants (80%) gave their agreement. So, it can be interpreted that the presented memes are very relevant to gen-Z humor.

Third, aspect function study how functionally meme on learning material. Scardina stated that memes as a tool of expression provide students with a viable and authentic way to illustrate their learning, and they are fun [3].

**Table 5.** Result of response in aspect function

	Item(s)	Scale				
		1	2	3	4	5
5.	Memes require supporting aids. (Text, oral, etc.)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (33.3%)	4 (26.7%)	6 (40%)
6.	Memes increase interest and motivation to learn.	0 (0%)	1 (6.7%)	3 (20%)	6 (40%)	5 (33.3%)
7.	Memes affect the mood when studying.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (13.3%)	5 (33.3%)	8 (53.3%)
8.	Memes make the adjective vocabulary material in <i>Watashi no Machi</i> look more interesting.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (6.7%)	7 (46.7%)	7 (46.7%)
9.	Memes make the delivery of adjective vocabulary material in <i>Watashi no Machi</i> more creative and less boring.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (13.3%)	8 (53.3%)	5 (33.3%)
10.	Memes express the adjective vocabulary material in <i>Watashi no Machi</i> in depth, making the material more vivid.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (20%)	4 (26.7%)	8 (53.3%)
11.	Memes are suitable for modern teaching.	0 (0%)	1 (6.7%)	4 (26.7%)	4 (26.7%)	6 (40%)
12.	Memes give a beautiful and deep impression in the adjective vocabulary material on <i>Watashi no Machi</i> .	0 (0%)	2 (13.3%)	4 (26.7%)	4 (26.7%)	5 (33.3%)

After aspect learning and content, lastly will be aspect function. This aspect has two indicators, usage of meme and existence of meme which contains eight items. In indicator usage of memes, the fifth item states the dependability of memes, does it need any supporting aids or not. According to the result, 10 participants (66.7%) agreed that meme does need supporting aids. So, it can be interpreted that meme alone is difficult to be understood by the participants.

The sixth item states the usage of memes in increasing interest and motivation to learn. According to the result, 11 participants (73.3%) agreed that memes do increase their interest and motivation to learn. Therefore, it can be interpreted that memes have an appropriate function in the lesson.

The seventh item examining about how using memes affects mood in the lesson. The result shows that 13 participants (86.6%) agreed that memes do affect their mood in lessons. So, it can be interpreted that meme does greatly affecting to the mood of participants in lessons.

Next, the eighth item stating about how the usage of memes makes learning material more interesting. The result shows a great favor, 14 participants (93.4%) agree that memes do make the learning material more interesting. So, it can be stated that meme does greatly functional in making learning material interesting.

Moving on to the ninth item states how memes make the delivery of learning material more creative and not boring. According to the result, it shows that 13 participants (86.6%) agree. So, it can interpret that memes functionally work in making the delivery of learning material more creative and not boring.

The tenth item in the usage of memes states how memes can express learning material in-depth and make it more vivid. From the result can be known that 12 participants (80%) showed their agreement with this statement. So, the interpretation that can be found in this item is that using memes does a good function in expressing learning material in-depth and making it more vivid.

Moving on next indicator, the existence of memes is asked through the eleventh and twelfth items. The eleventh item states how suitable is meme for modern teaching. 10 participants (66.7%) gave their agreement with that statement. So, it can be interpreted that meme is appropriate for modern teaching.

Lastly, the twelfth item, states how memes give a beautiful and deep impression on learning material. From the result, it shows that 9 participants (60%) gave their agreement. The interpretation that can be given according to the result is that meme is indeed giving a beautiful and deep impression on learning material.

### **3.2 Discussion**

According to the result that was given, in aspect learning, it shows that meme is appropriate for participants to understand and memorize learning material easier than the usual one. So, it can be concluded that meme is affecting students in terms of learning positively. Moving on to aspect content, more than half sample agreed that memes presented in meme-based learning material with the topic *Watashi no Machi* is easy to digest and relevant to their gen-Z humor. The conclusion that can be made is that memes presented are already relevant to their humor,

and this can back up the result from aspect learning, since the presented memes are easy to understand and relevant to their humor, making it easier to understand and memorize. Lastly, on aspect function, it also shows great results, even though participants feel that memes still need support aids to be understood, memes can affect participants' mood in learning, increasing their interest and motivation, making the learning material more interesting and delivering of it look creative, also expressing learning material in-depth and beautifully, making it more vivid, thus leaving participants some deep impression and the most important thing, it's relevant to the modern teaching.

## **4 Conclusion and suggestion**

### **4.1 Conclusion**

From the study conducted, several conclusions can be formulated as follows:

1. Meme-based learning material success helps students in SMAS Panjura in terms of understanding and remembering learning material better.
2. Presented meme-based learning material is easy to digest and relevant to humor gen-Z students in SMAS Panjura, which is affecting results from two other aspects as well.
3. Memes are able functionally to affect students' moods, making them more bearable to learn, and giving them a better impression of the delivered learning material. This is also related to the reason why conclusion (1) can succeed.
4. This study can prove Scardina [3] statement, which states that there's educational value in memes. The proof can be seen from the results of three aspects that have been analyzed.

### **4.2 Suggestion**

Based on the analysis and explanation given in this study, some suggestions can be given to the teacher and the next researcher:

1. The teachers

Memos are something that could be used as tools for the teacher to encourage their students, by understanding their tastes, students will feel more comfortable. That's why it's encouraged for teachers to try to slip some memes into learning material, and see how students react. Experiencing trial and error might be needed to understand students' taste, they might not like it, not even react a bit to it, or have a laugh about it. It might be an even longer journey for teachers who don't know well about memes, but don't be discouraged, some students usually appreciate their teacher for putting more effort into making the class more interesting.

2. The next researchers

Further study is needed to understand better how memes affect students in terms of education. Applying a different approach is good for starters, with even bigger samples. Utilize memes more creatively, like presenting them on video. Also, it suggested studying how the usage of memes affects students' academic scores and

does memes can shorten the distance between students and teachers, and lastly is about the problems that may arise from using meme in education.

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