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Measuring the Impact of Internet Memes on Social Interaction and Digital Communication Skills Among Students of the Faculty of Media at Yarmouk University: A Regression Analysis

Tahseen Mansour Mansour[1]*, Ismat Thalji Haddad[2]

[1] Department of Journalism, Media, and Digital Communication, The University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan

[2] Department of Journalism and Digital Communication, Yarmouk University, Jordan

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* *Corresponding author:*
t_mansour@ju.edu.jo

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Abstract

Objectives: This study explores the impact of internet memes on social interaction among students at the Faculty of Media, Yarmouk University, Jordan. It investigates how internet memes influence social engagement, understanding of social issues, participation in university activities, and the development of digital communication skills.

Methods: A survey methodology was employed, utilizing descriptive and analytical approaches to address the research questions. A sample of 210 students from different departments within the Faculty of Media at Yarmouk University was selected. The survey consisted of two sections: the first focused on demographic information and meme usage patterns, while the second assessed the impact of memes on social interaction, understanding of social issues, participation in discussions, and digital communication skills. Data were analyzed using simple regression techniques.

Results: The findings revealed that internet memes had a strong impact on social interaction (78%), communication skills (79%), and engagement with social issues (78.3%). However, their effect on fostering a deeper understanding of social issues was moderate (77%). Regression analysis showed that meme usage significantly contributed to improvements in social interaction, understanding of social issues, and communication skills, with statistical significance across all measured variables.

Conclusions: The study concludes that internet memes play a significant role in enhancing social interaction and communication skills among students at Yarmouk University. While memes help raise awareness about social issues and increase student participation, they are less effective in fostering a deeper understanding of complex social topics.

Keywords: Internet memes, social interaction, Yarmouk University students, impact, digital communication.

قياس تأثير ميمات الانترنت على التفاعل الاجتماعي ومهارات التواصل الرقمي لدى طلاب كلية الإعلام في جامعة اليرموك: تحليل انحدار

تحسين منصورمصور*[1]، عصمت ثلجي حداد [2]

[1] قسم الصحافة والإعلام والاتصال الرقمي، الجامعة الأردنية، عمّان، الأردن

[2] قسم الصحافة والإعلام الرقمي، كلية الإعلام، جامعة اليرموك، الأردن

ملخّص

الأهداف : تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف تأثير ميمات الانترنت على التفاعل الاجتماعي بين الطلاب في كلية الإعلام بجامعة اليرموك في الأردن. تبحث الدراسة في كيفية تأثير ميمات الانترنت على المشاركة الاجتماعية، وفهم القضايا الاجتماعية، والمشاركة في الأنشطة الجامعية، وتطوير مهارات الاتصال الرقمية بين الطلاب.

المنهجية تم استخدام منهجية المسح، مع تطبيق الأساليب الوصفية والتحليلية للإجابة على أسئلة البحث. وتكونت العينة من 210 طلاب من مختلف الأقسام في كلية الإعلام بجامعة اليرموك. يتكون الاستبيان من قسمين: الأول ركز على المعلومات الديموغرافية وأنماط استخدام الميمات، بينما تناول الثاني تأثير الميمات على التفاعل الاجتماعي، وفهم القضايا الاجتماعية، والمشاركة في المناقشات، ومهارات الاتصال الرقمية. تم تحليل البيانات باستخدام تقنيات الانحدار البسيط.

النتائج : أظهرت النتائج أن استخدام ميمات الانترنت كان له تأثير كبير على التفاعل الاجتماعي (78%)، ومهارات الاتصال (79%)، والمشاركة في القضايا الاجتماعية (78.3%). ومع ذلك، كان تأثير الميمات على الفهم الأعمق للقضايا الاجتماعية معتدلا (77%). أظهر تحليل الانحدار أن استخدام الميمات ساهم بشكل كبير في تحسين التفاعل الاجتماعي، وفهم القضايا الاجتماعية، ومهارات الاتصال، مع وجود دلالة إحصائية لجميع المتغيرات المقيسة.

الاستنتاجات : خلصت الدراسة إلى أن ميمات الانترت تلعب دوراً مهماً في تعزيز التفاعل الاجتماعي ومهارات الاتصال بين الطلاب في جامعة اليرموك. بينما تساعد الميمات في زيادة الوعي بالقضايا الاجتماعية وزيادة مشاركة الطلاب، إلا أنها أقل فعالية في تعزيز الفهم الأعمق للمواضيع الاجتماعية المعقدة.

الكلمات الدالة : ميمات الانترنت، التفاعل الاجتماعي، طلاب جامعة اليرموك، التأثير، الاتصال الرقمي.

Introduction

In the era of the internet and social media, memes have become an essential part of modern internet culture. Memes are defined as images or videos accompanied by humorous or sarcastic comments, which are rapidly shared and spread across internet platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Memes are used as tools to express ideas and emotions in an innovative way, making them an effective means of communication between individuals around the world. In the university context, memes can facilitate social interaction among students and strengthen their connections (Shifman, 2014).

Recently, memes have played an important role in various social and academic contexts. Petrucco and Agostini (2016) found that memes contribute to enhancing social interaction among students in universities, as they are used to exchange common ideas and experiences within campus settings. As this phenomenon continues to spread, the question remains regarding the impact of memes on social interaction among students, especially in disciplines focusing on social phenomena such as journalism, digital media, public relations, and radio and television.

Previous studies have indicated that memes are among the prominent digital communication tools that help build connections between individuals in the digital space. By sharing ideas and emotions, memes facilitate social interaction in various environments. In this context, the role of memes in enhancing social interaction within universities is evident, as they contribute to strengthening the collective identity among students. For example, Haima Aish study (2022) highlights that memes are an effective tool for reproducing and distributing ideas across digital networks, aligning with the current research focus on the impact of memes in enhancing social interaction among media students at Yarmouk University.

On the other hand, Abdullah's study (2023) found a correlational relationship between the frequency of meme use among youth and their attitudes toward cyberbullying, suggesting potential negative effects from improper meme use. This raises questions about the impact of memes on the quality of social communication among students in journalism and digital media, especially if they involve negative behaviors such as bullying or exclusion.

Meanwhile, El-Sayed's study (2023) concluded that memes can be effectively used to engage with specific issues on social media platforms. This study complements the current research, which aims to examine the impact of memes on understanding social issues among journalism and digital media students, particularly in stimulating critical thinking regarding social issues within the university. Additionally, Milner (2016) supported the notion that memes are not just entertainment tools but also effective communication methods that help organize social interaction and contribute to the creation of collective identity among individuals.

This research aims to study the impact of memes on collective identity and social interaction among media students at Yarmouk University. The research will focus on analyzing the effects of memes from two main perspectives: cultural and social impacts, as well as negative effects such as cyberbullying. The study seeks to provide a deeper understanding of how journalism and digital media students use memes in their social interactions, with a focus on the potential impact of this usage on personal and group relationships within the university environment. By analyzing behavioral patterns related to memes in this environment, the research contributes to expanding the understanding of the role of social media in shaping collective thought among new generations.

Theoretical Framework

First: Theories Related to the Impact of Memes Social Interaction

Symbolic Interactionism Theory:

Symbolic interactionism focuses on how individuals create meaning through shared symbols in their interactions. In the context of Media students at Yarmouk University, memes can be viewed as symbols that facilitate social interaction and help construct collective identities. This theory can be applied to understand how memes serve as a medium for students to interpret and assign meaning to their shared experiences, thereby shaping their social reality. For example, a meme that features a popular local news anchor with a funny or exaggerated facial expression in response to a political event could represent shared attitudes among media students towards media coverage of that event. This meme not only reflects their collective interpretation of media bias but also reinforces a sense of unity among students who share similar views. Another example could be a meme that makes fun of the typical university struggles, such as late-night study sessions before

exams. Such memes act as symbolic representations of the students' shared experiences, fostering a sense of belonging and mutual understanding. They reflect the collective identity of students at Yarmouk University, promoting shared understanding and emotional connection among them. Through these memes, students negotiate and reinforce their shared norms, values, and attitudes, which are essential components of their social interactions. Memes about common student life experiences, such as dealing with group projects, are frequently circulated to express collective frustrations, bonding the students over shared situations. These memes not only provide a platform for students to vent their frustrations but also create a space for collective reflection and solidarity. By interpreting and sharing these memes, students actively participate in the construction of their social reality, using humor and symbolism to navigate their academic and social environments (Blumer, 1969, Abdullah 2023).

Digital Communication Theory:

This theory examines how the internet and social media influence communication methods. In the case of Media students at Yarmouk University, memes are an effective tool for communication that enables students to express their opinions on various issues. This theory can be applied to analyze how memes serve as a digital language that transcends traditional communication barriers, allowing students to engage in rapid and meaningful exchanges For example, a meme discussing the controversial coverage of a political event or the spread of misinformation might become widely shared among students, allowing them to comment on the quality of media in their environment. This meme not only facilitates immediate feedback and discussion but also encourages critical thinking about media ethics and credibility. Another example could be a meme featuring a humorous take on the use of digital media for academic purposes, like "When you search for sources and end up watching YouTube videos instead", reflecting students' attitudes toward digital distractions and learning habits. Such memes highlight the dual role of digital media as both a tool for learning and a source of distraction, prompting students to reflect on their digital consumption patterns. This theory emphasizes how digital communication contributes to accelerating interactions among students. Memes, as a form of digital communication, enable students to quickly share ideas, emotions, and critiques, creating a dynamic and interactive online community. In the context of Yarmouk University, memes help students engage with each other about university life, social issues, and their opinions on digital media's role in shaping public discourse, thereby improving their digital communication skills. Through the creation and sharing of memes, students develop skills in digital literacy, such as interpreting visual content, crafting concise messages, and navigating online platforms effectively (Castells, 2009; Baym, 2015, Boyd, 2014, Van Dijck, 2013).

Media Influence Theory:

This theory focuses on how media shapes individuals' behaviors and attitudes. In the context of digital memes, they serve as a form of media that influences students' perceptions of social issues. This theory can be applied to understand how memes act as a powerful tool for shaping public discourse and influencing the attitudes of Media students at Yarmouk University.

For example, a meme that satirizes the negative effects of cyberbullying or jokes about the latest social media trend might lead students to reflect on the seriousness of these issues. Such memes not only raise awareness about the issue but also encourage students to critically evaluate their own online behaviors and the impact of their digital interactions.

Another example could be a meme that humorously comments on gender stereotypes in the media, which may spark critical discussions among students about the representation of women or men in media. These memes serve as a catalyst for dialogue, prompting students to question societal norms and challenge stereotypes perpetuated by traditional media.

In the environment of Yarmouk University, memes can serve as tools for reflection on social issues, allowing students to engage in meaningful discussions. By using humor and satire, memes make complex social issues more accessible, enabling students to engage with topics they might otherwise find intimidating or irrelevant. Memes that highlight current social movements or significant political events can guide students to think critically about how media influences public opinion, political views, or their daily lives. For instance, a meme about a global movement like climate change can inspire students to reflect on their role in addressing environmental issues and how media can be used to advocate for change. These discussions can help students understand how memes shape public perceptions and how they themselves can use

media to influence social change. Through the creation and sharing of memes, students learn to harness the power of digital media to amplify their voices, challenge dominant narratives, and contribute to societal transformation **(**McCombs, & Shaw, 1972, Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1986).

Conclusion:

The application of these three theories namely Symbolic Interactionism, Digital Communication, and Media Influence provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how memes contribute to communication, interaction, and critical thinking among Media students at Yarmouk University. Through Symbolic Interactionism, memes are shown to act as shared symbols that help students construct collective identities and negotiate social meanings. Digital Communication Theory highlights how memes facilitate rapid and meaningful exchanges, enhancing students' digital literacy and engagement. Meanwhile, Media Influence Theory demonstrates how memes shape students' perceptions of social issues and empower them to challenge dominant narratives.

Memes are not just a form of entertainment; they are powerful tools for social interaction, expressing shared views, and reflecting on contemporary issues. They enable students to navigate their academic, social, and digital environments by fostering a sense of belonging, encouraging critical dialogue, and promoting digital activism. By engaging with memes, students not only enhance their understanding of the media's role in shaping society but also develop the skills needed to use media as a force for positive social change.

Second: The Impact of Memes on Cultural Identity and Social Interaction: Literature Review

Various studies have explored the impact of memes on social interaction in digital learning environments, often highlighting their positive effects on student engagement and learning outcomes. For example, Majdzińska-Koczorowicz and Ostanina-Olszewska (2021) investigated the use of memes in online learning by comparing two groups of students: one taught using traditional methods and the other with memes integrated into lessons. The results indicated that memes enhanced dialogue among students, improved social interaction, and contributed to better performance and participation in class discussions. These findings are consistent with Petrucco and Agostini (2016), who examined the role of memes in virtual classrooms and found that they promoted active learning and encouraged students to express their thoughts and emotions in creative ways. Similarly, Xie, De Serio, Malakhov, and Matys (2020) demonstrated that memes can summarize academic concepts in an attention-grabbing manner, simplifying complex information and fostering active learning environments where students interact more effectively with content.

In higher education contexts, Petrucco and Agostini (2016) further emphasized that while memes improve student interaction, their effective use depends on proper teacher training. Zhou (2020) also highlighted that memes in online learning environments simplify complex concepts and enhance interaction between students and instructors, underscoring their role in facilitating academic communication. Additionally, Majdzińska-Koczorowicz and Ostanina-Olszewska (2021) noted the usefulness of memes in distance education during the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrating that they effectively capture students' attention and encourage engagement in online lessons. Overall, these studies suggest that memes are a powerful educational tool for enhancing social interaction, comprehension, and engagement in digital learning settings.

At the cultural and social level, memes have been shown to significantly influence social interaction and identity formation. For instance, De Saint Laurent et al. (2021) investigated the role of memes in shaping cultural identity and social engagement among social media users, finding that memes help strengthen cultural ties and enhance collective social identity. Similarly, Al-Rawi (2021) examined political memes on Instagram, demonstrating their potential to shape social perceptions during elections and influence public opinion on political matters. Shifman (2014) also highlighted the impact of memes on political discourse, showing that they can guide public discussion and contribute to the formation of students' political and social attitudes.

While memes often have positive social effects, they can also have negative consequences. Marr and Duell (2020) found that memes can sometimes exacerbate cyberbullying among university students, highlighting the potential risks of their use in educational settings. Liang et al. (2018) examined the "Chinese Meme War" of 2016 on Facebook, showing how memes can be a powerful medium for disseminating political information and shaping public opinion on sensitive issues. Finally,

Bishop (2016) discussed the psychological dimensions of memes, emphasizing their effectiveness in entertainment and social bonding. The study confirmed that memes can enhance social interaction and foster interactive environments that promote collective and critical thinking among students.

Based on these studies, it is clear that memes are not limited to entertainment or humor; they have become a powerful tool in stimulating social interaction and shaping discussions on social and political issues. Memes also play an important role in influencing cultural and collective identity in the digital space, especially in university learning environments, where they serve as a fast and unconventional means of communication between students.

Third: Internet Memes: Concept, Role in Social Interaction, and Cultural Impact

1. Definition of Memes:

Memes are defined as forms of digital content that spread rapidly across the internet, often consisting of images, videos, or text used to convey humorous, cultural, or political messages. What distinguishes a meme is its capacity for "cultural replication," in which content is reproduced and modified by individuals to create new variations. According to Shifman (2014), memes are an integral part of internet culture, reflecting societal ideas and beliefs through digital media and thereby enhancing social communication in online spaces. For media students, memes serve as an innovative communication tool, allowing them to express their perspectives on various issues and reach a wide audience quickly. Consequently, memes facilitate cultural dissemination and promote broad discussions on the internet (Shifman, 2014**)**.

2. The Role of Memes in Interaction:

Memes are an effective tool for enhancing social interaction in digital environments. They facilitate the sharing of thoughts and emotions among students, fostering connections around specific topics or issues. Petrucco and Agostini (2016) note that memes improve social relationships in universities by encouraging students to communicate humorously and directly, contributing to more interactive learning environments. This type of engagement facilitates communication on multiple levels and strengthens peer connections. Milner (2016) further argues that memes provide media students with opportunities to develop their digital and media literacy skills, enhancing their ability to influence audiences through impactful messages. In this way, memes not only promote critical thinking but also encourage collective reflection and collaborative learning among students.

3. The Cultural Impact of Memes:

Memes have a profound influence on digital and contemporary culture, playing a significant role in shaping cultural perceptions on many social and political issues. Memes are an effective tool for critiquing issues and highlighting prevailing attitudes, making them a powerful medium for social change. For example, during the 2016 U.S. elections, activists used memes to influence public opinion, reflecting their ability to convey political messages unconventionally. Castells (2009) notes that the internet provides platforms for rapidly transmitting cultural and personal ideas, and memes are among the most prominent means used to convey messages aimed at society as a whole. For journalism and media students, memes can contribute to raising awareness about issues of political and social identity, thus enhancing collective awareness within universities and broader communities. Moreover, memes help create a digital culture that blends humor with social messages, reflecting the ongoing interaction between popular culture and modern technologies.

4. Memes and Media Students:

Media students use memes as a means of expressing their views on social and political issues. According to Zhou (2020), using memes provides them with a space to interact with public issues in innovative and quick ways, reflecting the influence of these digital tools on shaping the media thinking of the new generation of journalists. Through this medium, students can express their views on contemporary issues and promote discussions on matters affecting society. Memes can also be used as a tool for conveying political or social messages through unconventional methods, reflecting their ability to influence public opinion. In this context, Shifman (2014) argues that memes are not merely humorous tools but can be an effective medium for expressing political values and beliefs, thus serving as a multidimensional means of mass communication.

5. Digital Communication and Its Impact on Interaction:

Research indicates that communication through memes can contribute to creating new social dynamics among students, as digital communication enhances relationships among individuals in the university space. According to Berger and Luckmann (1966), memes represent a way to exchange messages between individuals in an indirect form, facilitating discussions about issues of interest to students. When used effectively, memes can open up new spaces for dialogue, thus enhancing intellectual and social interaction among students. However, this type of communication may affect the quality of social relationships, as excessive use of memes could lead to isolation or reinforce stereotypical perceptions about certain issues if used excessively or thoughtlessly. Therefore, it must be used mindfully and consciously to achieve meaningful and sustainable social interaction among students.

Problem Statement:

The problem of this study lies in understanding the impact of memes on social interaction among students of journalism and digital media at Yarmouk University. With the widespread popularity of memes on internet platforms and social media, it has become essential to understand how this phenomenon affects student interactions. Memes have become one of the prominent tools used by individuals to express themselves and share opinions. However, the question remains: Do memes contribute to improving social interaction among students, or do they create challenges that affect social communication? Additionally, there is a need to understand how memes contribute to shaping students' views on social, economic, and political issues and how they affect the quality of social interaction within the university space.

Research Questions:

1. To what extent do the types of memes (images, texts, videos, etc.) and their frequency of use predict the level of social interaction among students of the Faculty of Media at Yarmouk University?
2. What is the relationship between the use of memes (images, texts, videos, etc.) and the quality and frequency of social interactions among students of the Faculty of Media at Yarmouk University?
3. How do memes (images, texts, videos, etc.) influence students' perceptions of social issues and their engagement in discussions about these issues on social media platforms?
4. To what extent does the creation and sharing of memes (images, texts, videos, etc.) predict the development of digital communication skills, such as visual literacy and concise messaging, among students of the Faculty of Media at Yarmouk University?
5. What are the positive and negative effects of using memes (images, texts, videos, etc.) on the level and quality of social interaction among students of the Faculty of Media at Yarmouk University?

Methodology: This study adopts a descriptive and analytical survey methodology to answer the research questions related to the impact of internet memes on social interaction in the culture of students in the College of Media at Yarmouk University. Data will be collected from a sample of students to analyze the effects of memes on various aspects of social interaction, including their cultural and psychological impacts.

Population and Sample: The study population consists of all undergraduate students in the College of Mass Communication at Yarmouk University, which includes the Departments of Journalism and Digital Media, Public Relations and Advertising, and Radio and Television. The total number of students is 1,200, according to the university's admissions and registration department. A simple random sample of 210 students was selected, representing 17.5% of the total population. This sample size is considered adequate and suitable for the study. What kind of random sampling did you use?

Table 1: Characteristics of the Sample

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	69	32.9%
Female	141	67.1%
Major		

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Journalism & Digital Media	107	51.0%
Public Relations & Media	54	25.7%
Radio & Television	49	23.3%
Academic Year		
First Year	50	23.8%
Second Year	49	23.3%
Third Year	31	14.8%
Fourth Year	80	38.1%
Total	210	100.0%

Study Tool: The study tool was developed based on a set of previous studies that explored the impact of internet memes on social interaction. The questionnaire consists of two parts. Part 1 contains questions related to the personal characteristics of respondents, such as gender (Male/Female), major (Journalism, Public Relations, Radio and Television), and academic year (First, Second, Third, Fourth). Part 2 comprises 20 statements representing key areas related to the study, including the independent variable (usage of memes) and dependent variables such as social interaction, understanding of social issues, engagement with social issues, and development of communication skills. Responses are measured using a Likert scale (3 = Agree, 2 = Neutral, 1 = Disagree).

Validity and Reliability: The validity of the tool was tested by presenting it to a group of experts, including faculty members in digital media and social media sociology at the University of Jordan. The experts confirmed that the tool measures what it is intended to measure, with minor adjustments made to enhance clarity. To ensure reliability, internal consistency was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha, with values ranging from 0.70 to 0.80 for the different variables and 0.87 for the overall tool. These values indicate a high level of reliability in the measurement tool (questionnaire) and strong internal consistency among the questionnaire items related to each variable.

Table 2: Cronbach's Alpha for Reliability

Topic	Internal Consistency
Usage of memes as a communication tool	0.75
Impact of meme usage on social interaction	0.73
Impact of memes on understanding social issues	0.80
Impact of memes on the ability to engage with social issues	0.70
Impact of meme usage on developing communication skills	0.74
Overall Tool	0.87

Statistical Analysis Model:

In this study, simple regression will be used to analyze the relationship between the independent variable (use of memes) and the dependent variables outlined in the research questions. The relationship can be represented using the following mathematical model:

$$Yi = \beta 0 + \beta 1 Xi + \epsilon i$$

Where:

- **Yi** refers to the dependent variable (e.g., use of memes as a communication tool, impact on social interaction, etc.).
- **Xi** represents the independent variable, "use of memes" (e.g., images, videos, texts shared via social media platforms).

- **β0** is the constant term (intercept), which represents the social interaction or understanding when memes are not used (X = 0).
- **β1** is the coefficient that reflects the impact of meme usage on the dependent variable (such as social interaction, understanding of issues, etc.).
- **ϵi** represents the error term, reflecting the unexplained variance in the dependent variable due to factors not included in the model.

This regression analysis will help assess the impact of meme usage on various aspects of social interaction and digital communication skills development among students at Yarmouk University.

Study Results:

1. **Question 1**: To what extent do the types of memes (images, texts, videos, etc.) and their frequency of use predict the level of social interaction among students of the Faculty of Media at Yarmouk University?

The responses were analyzed using mean averages, standard deviations, and percentages, as shown in Table (3).

Table (3) Descriptive Statistics of Meme Usage and Its Impact on Social Interaction and Communication Skills

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Percentage	Degree
Use of internet memes	2.34	0.42	78%	High
Effect of meme usage on social interaction	2.32	0.49	77.3%	Moderate
Effect of memes on understanding social issues in digital interaction context	2.31	0.53	77%	Moderate
Effect of meme usage on the ability to engage with social issues	2.35	0.53	78.3%	High
Effect of meme usage on developing communication skills	2.37	0.52	79%	High
Overall Mean	2.34	0.49	78%	High

The results indicate that the overall mean for the use of internet memes and their effects on social interaction in the culture of journalism students at Yarmouk University was 2.34 (78%), which is considered high according to the study's scale. Regarding individual variables, the mean for the use of memes was 2.30 (78%), which is classified within the high category according to the scale used in the study.

As for the effects, the highest effect was found in the development of communication skills, with a mean of 2.37 (79%), reflecting the significant impact of memes in enhancing students' digital communication abilities. Following that, the effect on students' ability to engage with social issues was 78.3%. In contrast, the effect of memes on understanding social issues and on social interaction was found to be at moderate levels, with the mean for understanding social issues at 2.31 (77%) and for social interaction at 2.32 (77.3%).

1. **Question2:** What is the relationship between the use of memes (images, texts, videos, etc.) and the quality and frequency of social interactions among students of the Faculty of Media at Yarmouk University?

Table 4: Effect of Meme Usage on Social Interaction

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	F Value	Statistical Significance	R Value	R^2 Value	β	Standard Error	T Value	Statistical Significance (Sig)	Effect Judgment
Internet Meme Usage	Effect on Social Interaction	53.198	0.000	0.451	0.204	0.519	0.071	7.294	0.000	Significant Effect

The table shows a correlation of 0.451 between meme usage and social interaction, indicating a moderate positive relationship between the two variables. The R^2 value of 0.204 means that 20.4% of the variation in social interaction can be explained by changes in meme usage. The T value of 7.294 with a significance of 0.000 confirms a strong and significant effect of meme usage on social interaction. The relationship can be expressed by the equation:

$Y = 0.071 + 0.451X$.

Question3: How do memes (images, texts, videos, etc.) influence students' perceptions of social issues and their engagement in discussions about these issues on social media platforms?

Table 5: Effect of Meme Usage on Understanding Social Issues

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	F Value	Statistical Significance	R Value	R^2 Value	β	Standard Error	T Value	Statistical Significance (Sig)	Effect Judgment
Internet Meme Usage	Effect on Understanding Social Issues	65.151	0.000	0.488	0.239	0.607	0.075	8.072	0.000	Significant Effect

The table shows a correlation of 0.488 between meme usage and understanding social issues, indicating a moderate positive relationship. The R^2 value of 0.239 means that 23.9% of the variation in understanding social issues can be explained by meme usage. The T value of 8.072 with a significance of 0.000 confirms a strong and significant effect of meme usage on understanding social issues. The relationship can be expressed by the equation:

$Y = 0.075 + 0.488X$.

Question4: To what extent does the creation and sharing of memes (images, texts, videos, etc.) predict the development of digital communication skills, such as visual literacy and concise messaging, among students of the Faculty of Media at Yarmouk University?

Table 6: Effect of Meme Usage on the Ability to Engage with Social Issues

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	F Value	Statistical Significance	R Value	R^2 Value	β	Standard Error	T Value	Statistical Significance (Sig)	Effect Judgment
Internet Meme Usage	Effect on Ability to Engage with Social Issues	30.095	0.000	0.356	0.126	0.444	0.081	5.486	0.000	Significant Effect

The table shows a correlation of 0.356 between meme usage and the ability to engage with social issues, indicating a moderate to weak positive relationship. The R^2 value of 0.126 means that 12.6% of the variation in the ability to engage with social issues can be explained by meme usage. The T value of 5.486 with a significance of 0.000 confirms a strong and significant effect of meme usage on the ability to engage with social issues. The relationship can be expressed by the equation:

$Y = 0.081 + 0.356X$.

Question5: What are the positive and negative effects of using memes (images, texts, videos, etc.) on the level and quality of social interaction among students of the Faculty of Media at Yarmouk University?

Table 7: Effect of Meme Usage on Developing Digital Communication Skills

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	F Value	Statistical Significance	R Value	R^2 Value	β	Standard Error	T Value	Statistical Significance (Sig)	Effect Judgment
Internet Meme Usage	Effect on Developing Digital Communication Skills	49.755	0.000	0.439	0.193	0.543	0.077	7.054	0.000	Significant Effect

The table shows a correlation of 0.439 between meme usage and developing digital communication skills, indicating a moderate positive relationship. The R^2 value of 0.193 means that 19.3% of the variation in developing communication skills can be explained by meme usage. The T value of 7.054 with a significance of 0.000 confirms a strong and significant effect of meme usage on developing communication skills. The relationship can be expressed by the equation:

$Y = 0.077 + 0.43$

Through the simple regression analysis, it is evident that meme usage significantly influences social interaction, understanding of social issues, the ability to engage with them, and the development of digital communication skills among students at Yarmouk University. All the effects were statistically significant and showed a positive influence, highlighting the role of memes as an effective tool in the digital learning environment.

Discussion of Results:

The results of this study indicate that internet memes play a significant role in enhancing social interaction among journalism students at Yarmouk University. This finding is consistent with previous research, such as that of Petrucco & Agostini (2016) and Zhou (2020), which found that memes foster interaction within digital learning environments. The regression analysis revealed a moderate positive relationship between meme usage and social interaction ($r = 0.451$, $p < 0.000$), indicating that memes serve as a catalyst for informal and spontaneous communication among students. This aligns with symbolic interactionism theory (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969), which posits that shared symbols, such as memes, facilitate collective meaning-making and strengthen group identity. For example, memes that humorously depict common academic experiences, such as preparing for exams or dealing with group projects, create a sense of shared identity and belonging among students, reinforcing the theory's emphasis on the role of symbols in shaping social interactions.

Additionally, the study highlights that memes raise awareness about social issues, a concept supported by De Saint Laurent et al. (2021), who identified memes as influential tools for engaging with social and political topics. However, the moderate impact of memes on understanding social issues (Mean = 2.31, 77%) suggests that while memes are effective in capturing attention and sparking initial interest, they may lack the depth needed to foster comprehensive understanding. This finding echoes Milner's (2016) observation that the brevity and humor of memes often limit their ability to facilitate in-depth discourse. For instance, a meme about climate change may raise awareness about the issue but may not provide sufficient context or information to encourage critical analysis or long-term engagement. This limitation is consistent with media influence theory (Bishop, 2016; Milner, 2016), which argues that media tools can influence public opinion but may not always facilitate in-depth discourse on complex topics.

In conclusion, while memes are undeniably valuable for enhancing social interaction, improving communication skills, and raising awareness about social issues, there is a need for more structured strategies to facilitate deeper understanding and discourse on these topics. Integrating memes with other educational methods, such as group discussions or research assignments, could provide a more comprehensive approach for achieving these goals. For example, after sharing a meme about a social issue like gender equality, instructors could facilitate a group discussion where students explore the issue in greater depth, using the meme as a starting point. This approach not only leverages the engaging nature of memes but also

addresses their limitations in fostering comprehensive understanding and critical thinking.

The results of this study are consistent with the theoretical frameworks that underpin the research. Symbolic interactionism theory (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969) is particularly relevant, as memes serve as shared symbols that facilitate social interaction and collective meaning-making among students. For instance, a meme that humorously critiques the challenges of online learning, such as 'When your Wi-Fi disconnects during an important lecture,' not only resonates with students' experiences but also provides a shared platform for expressing frustrations and building solidarity. This type of meme exemplifies how humor and relatability can enhance social interaction and foster a sense of community among students.

Additionally, the findings support digital communication theory (Castells, 2009; Baym, 2015), which highlights the transformative role of digital tools in enhancing communication. The regression analysis revealed a significant positive effect of meme usage on digital communication skills ($r = 0.439$, $p < 0.000$), indicating that memes provide students with a creative and engaging way to express ideas and emotions. For example, creating a meme that critiques a social issue using humor and imagery helps students practice skills such as visual storytelling, audience engagement, and concise messaging. These skills are essential in the digital age, where effective communication often relies on the ability to capture attention quickly and convey messages clearly.

Finally, the results align with media influence theory (Bishop, 2016; Milner, 2016), which underscores the role of media in shaping perceptions and behaviors. While memes are effective in raising awareness about social issues, their impact on fostering deeper understanding or critical engagement is limited. For example, a meme addressing a social issue like climate change may capture attention and spark initial interest, but it often lacks the depth needed to encourage comprehensive discussion or critical analysis. This limitation is consistent with the theory's argument that media tools can influence public opinion but may not always facilitate in-depth discourse on complex topics.

Regression analysis confirms that memes positively influence social interaction, engagement with social issues, and the enhancement of digital communication skills among students at Yarmouk University. While these results are aligned with prior research, they also underscore the need to combine meme usage with other educational methods to provide more robust discussions and a deeper understanding of social topics. For instance, educators could design activities where students analyze memes critically, exploring both their humorous elements and their underlying messages. This approach would not only enhance students' digital communication skills but also encourage them to think critically about the role of memes in shaping public discourse.

Key Results:

1. **Social Interaction:**

The regression analysis reveals a significant positive effect of meme usage on social interaction among students ($r = 0.451$, $p < 0.000$), indicating a moderate positive relationship. This finding aligns with symbolic interactionism theory (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969), which emphasizes the role of shared symbols in fostering social interaction and collective meaning-making. For instance, a meme depicting students struggling to focus in class, with a humorous caption like, 'When you're trying to focus in class but your mind is somewhere else,' not only resonates with students' shared experiences but also strengthens their sense of belonging and group identity. This supports the theory's assertion that symbols, such as memes, play a crucial role in shaping social interactions and building community.

2. **Understanding Social Issues:**

The regression analysis also indicates that memes positively influence students' understanding of social issues ($r = 0.488$, $p < 0.000$). This finding is consistent with media influence theory (Bishop, 2016; Milner, 2016), which posits that media tools, including memes, shape public perceptions and behaviors. For example, a meme about social justice featuring a well-known protest image with the caption, 'Change starts here,' can effectively raise awareness and spark initial interest. However, the moderate impact of memes on understanding social issues (Mean = 2.31, 77%) suggests that while memes are powerful in capturing attention, their brevity and humor often limit their ability to facilitate in-depth discourse. This aligns with the theory's argument that media tools can influence public opinion but may not always encourage critical

analysis or comprehensive understanding.

3. Engaging with Social Issues:

The regression results show that memes have a moderate to strong effect on students' engagement with social issues ($r = 0.356$, $p < 0.000$). This finding aligns with digital communication theory (Castells, 2009; Baym, 2015), which highlights the role of digital tools in enhancing communication and expanding social dialogue. For example, a political meme critiquing a politician's stance may encourage students to engage in political discourse, thereby improving their ability to participate in social and political discussions. However, the moderate strength of this relationship suggests that while memes are effective in sparking initial engagement, they may not always lead to sustained or in-depth discussions. This underscores the need to complement meme usage with other educational methods that encourage critical thinking and deeper exploration of social issues.

4. Developing Digital Communication Skills:

The regression analysis further reveals that memes significantly contribute to enhancing students' digital communication skills ($r = 0.439$, $p < 0.000$). This finding supports digital communication theory (Castells, 2009; Baym, 2015), which emphasizes the transformative role of digital tools in improving communication skills. For instance, creating a meme that uses humor or sarcasm to critique a social issue helps students practice skills such as visual storytelling, audience engagement, and concise messaging. These skills are essential in the digital age, where effective communication often relies on the ability to convey complex ideas quickly and creatively. The strong positive relationship between meme usage and digital communication skills highlights the potential of memes as a tool for fostering digital literacy among students.

5. Cultural and Social Implications of Memes:

Finally, the study highlights that memes not only influence social interaction and academic learning but also play a significant role in the development of cultural and social identities. This finding is consistent with symbolic interactionism theory (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969), which emphasizes the role of shared symbols in creating collective meanings and identities. For example, a meme reflecting university culture, such as one about students reconnecting with friends after returning to school, strengthens students' sense of belonging and fosters social bonds within the academic community. This supports the theory's assertion that symbols, such as memes, are central to the construction of group identity and social cohesion.

Conclusion:

The results of the regression analysis show that memes have a positive impact on social interaction, understanding and engaging with social issues, and improving digital communication skills among students at Yarmouk University. These findings align with previous studies, such as those by Petrucco & Agostini (2016) and Zhou (2020), but also highlight the need to integrate memes with other educational methods to facilitate deeper and more comprehensive discussions on social issues. For instance, while memes are effective in raising awareness and sparking initial interest, their moderate impact on understanding social issues (Mean = 2.31, 77%) suggests that they should be complemented with structured activities, such as group discussions or research assignments, to encourage critical thinking and in-depth analysis. Memes are a powerful tool for enhancing student interaction, as they offer a flexible and innovative platform for expressing opinions and views on social topics, contributing to the development of critical thinking and discussion skills among students.

Additionally, it should be noted that memes are not just tools for entertainment, but they carry a cultural and social significance that enhances group identity and interaction among students. This is consistent with symbolic interactionism theory (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969), which emphasizes the role of shared symbols in fostering social cohesion and collective identity. To maximize the benefits of memes in educational environments, it is crucial to integrate them with other educational methods, such as lectures and group discussions, which help deepen understanding and enrich the discussions. For example, after sharing a meme about a social issue like climate change, instructors could facilitate a group discussion where students explore the issue in greater depth, using the meme as a starting point. This approach not only leverages the engaging nature of memes but also addresses their limitations in fostering comprehensive understanding and critical thinking. Furthermore, considering that digital education has become a central feature in the modern era, the study

demonstrates that memes contribute to developing digital communication skills and help students participate more effectively in remote learning environments.

Recommendations:

1. Incorporate memes into educational activities to encourage students to express opinions and engage in academic and social discussions. For example, instructors could design assignments where students create memes related to course content, fostering both creativity and critical thinking.
2. Organize workshops to teach students how to use memes constructively and appropriately in educational and social contexts. These workshops could focus on the ethical use of memes, as well as their potential for raising awareness about social issues.
3. Encourage the use of memes to stimulate discussions on complex social issues, linking them to articles and in-depth studies. For instance, a meme about gender equality could be used as a starting point for a discussion on gender representation in media.
4. Conduct future studies to explore the broader impact of memes on areas like psychological effects and personal development. This could include investigating how memes influence students' mental health or self-esteem.
5. Promote memes as an unconventional communication tool for spreading positive messages, such as raising awareness about social issues. For example, memes could be used in campaigns to promote environmental sustainability or social justice.
6. Strengthen collaboration between faculty and students in utilizing memes as both educational content and a form of expression. This could involve creating a platform where students and faculty share and discuss memes related to academic topics.
7. Keep track of technological advancements to update training programs and improve students' skills in using memes and digital communication tools. This is particularly important in the context of remote learning, where digital literacy is essential."

Appendix 1: Names of Survey Judges

No.	Name	Position	Institution
1	Dr. Ibrahim Abu Arqoub	Professor of Media and Sociology	Formerly at the University of Jordan
2	Dr. Helmi Sari	Professor of Sociology of Mass Comm.	Formerly at the University of Jordan
3	Dr. Yasmeen Al-Damen	Assistant Professor of Digital Media	University of Jordan

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