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Memes, memetics and their applications: A systematic review of literature

Abstract

Memes are not new concepts, but they have garnered popularity recently. They are a prevalent form of communication on various social media platforms. However, due to a lack of concrete literature (Al Rashdi, 2020), there is still some initial scepticism surrounding them. This paper uses a systematic literature review to create a pool of research papers to be examined to chart the conceptual development of memes, determine how they are used in different fields, and present a vision of memes in the near future. It identifies eleven areas which were studied in parallel to memes, suggesting possible meme applications and development. It adopts the PRISMA 2020 framework to ensure systematic screening and reporting of relevant papers from various databases.

Keywords: meme, memetics, meme marketing, viral, internet memes, management, branding, advertising, communication

Introduction

In today's digital age, memes have emerged as powerful tools for communication and marketing (Shifman, 2013). They are generalized data, ideas or information. They seamlessly engage diverse audiences, as noted by Tuten and Solomon (2017), who emphasize their effectiveness in targeted communication, resulting in fruitful engagement.

Memes encompass text, images, graphics, or videos that are consumed, replicated, modified, and shared by like-minded people (Shifman, 2013). They are referred to as the "Unit of Transmission" (Castaño Diaz, 2013). They have become a popular way to express opinions, feelings, and ideas, often employing humour or satire (Hakoköngäs et al., 2020). Humour helps to spread their message without potentially hurting the sentiments of the reader. Memes have become so widespread in society that 'a distinct field of study has evolved, called *Memetics* (Oliveira et al., 2016; Shifman, 2013).

Although memes can engage audiences, amplify brand presence, and facilitate mass communication, empowering corporations and marketers for broader outreach (Marsden, 2002), they remain largely untapped by many firms, signalling a need for broader adoption and effective implementation (Ngo, 2021). This highlights the significance of thorough research on memes to enable marketers and businesses to comprehend their background, meaning, and usage fully. Such research necessitates a comprehensive understanding of the nature of memes and the diverse domains in which they can be effectively employed.

Related literature

Memes include a variety of concepts, from words, puzzles, and songs to social ethics. Dr. Richard Dawkins first introduced the concept of 'memes' in 'The Selfish Gene' in 1976 (Dawkins, 2016) in parallel with genes and their tendency to replicate and increase the rate of survival. He suggested that memes have the same characteristics as genes, and they act to transmit behaviour. They require artistic flair and creativity for successful imitation and variation (Shifman, 2013). Blackmore (1998) referred to memes as imitated traits passed on in the form of ideas or behaviour, such as religious practices like saying prayers before meals. Bjarneskans, Grønnevik and Sandberg (2008)

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quoted memes as a structure that carries information capable of being replicated, like slogans.

Dennett (1990) described a meme as an object with three essential qualities: variation, heredity, and differential fitness. A meme should consist of some variations in terms of content, mode of dispersal, and form, and evolve with the changes in the cognitive as well as social environment. Each meme should have heredity or a ground zero from which it is developed and to which it can be traced back. It should have a definite source. Also, for memes to attain longevity, they should be equipped or designed in a way that they can adapt to external environmental changes. Memes with these qualities are capable of surviving and growing with or without changes. They should stay with their hosts for a longer time and eventually morph into permanent habits, rituals, or beliefs.

They are expected to replicate themselves from one brain to another in ways corresponding to the way in which genes replicate themselves and multiply from one person to another. They should possess the quality of fecundity (Atran, 2001). They should be able to multiply and be passed on to live long enough in people's memories that they become a part of their lives. If not replicable, they are unable to multiply or be passed on to future generations and fade away with time.

The popularity of memes and their ability to reach a mass audience have prompted companies, researchers, scholars, and the marketing world to take serious note of their development and keep track of them.

The present state of affairs

In the current landscape, there is a surge of companies offering digital and social media marketing solutions. Corporations now delegate tasks like meme-driven brand awareness, online brand management, identity curation, and viral marketing to specialized agencies. Memes floating on the internet play a significant role in this landscape. Marketing firms are leveraging them to engage audiences on clients' social media platforms, leading to the rise of meme-focused content and popular brand-affiliated social media pages (Tuten & Solomon, 2017).

Also, numerous meme-based applications have emerged, providing various meme templates and a novel avenue for income generation through meme creation and dissemination. With platforms such as Meme Generator, MemeChat, and Meme Maker, ... continue to proliferate, and individuals are actively crafting and sharing new memes and their variations. In line with this trend, a meme-centric dating application called 'Schmooze', founded by Stanford graduate Vidya Madhavan, has been launched. It utilizes humour algorithms to connect individuals based on shared comedic preferences, gaining traction among users (Nasdaq, 2021).

Furthermore, memes are also created as a form of craft, as they require creativity and imagination, giving them the status of an 'art treasure.' For the same reason, a meme museum, the first of its kind,

was opened in Hong Kong in 2021, showcasing different memes, such as "disaster girl", "Salt bae", "Troll face", etc., which are famous worldwide (Times of India, 2021).

Moreover, meme-based cryptocurrencies such as "Dogecoin", introduced in 2013, attracted massive investment in January of 2021, leading to an increase in price and value (Tjahyana, 2021). Thus, summarizing the present state of affairs, memes are dominating social media marketing, utilized by numerous digital agencies to boost engagement and brand visibility. With meme-based applications proliferating for income generation, the future of memes appears promising. The following section discusses a few important meme-related terminologies.

Important terminology

The following paragraphs discuss the concept of Memetics, Memplexes, Meme Marketing, and Internet Memes.

- **Memetics:** Memetics is a study of memes and related issues. "The science of memetics aims to understand the evolution of socially transmitted cultural traits" (Kendal & Laland, 2008, p. 1004). It is yet to take the form of complete science, as loose ends need to be explained and proven scientifically. One of the crucial issues is operationalizing memetics and putting it to practical use (Marsden, 2008). For memetics to develop as a fully accepted science, it needs a pragmatic background with a quantitative base capable of validating and falsifying claims on scientific levels. As Robert Aunger, Associate Professor, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine said, "Memetics needs to come up with supported, unique predictions and/or existence proof to become valuable. The challenge to our speakers is to provide some support either theoretical or empirical for the meme hypothesis" (Aunger, 2002; Finkelstein, 2008, p.185).
- **Memplexes:** This term, being analogous to Gene-complexes, was used by Susan Blackmore in 1998 (Blackmore, 1998) to identify the pool of memes of similar nature. They are the collective ideas that have gained stability over a period of time and would not be forgotten easily (Murray et al., 2014), such as good parenting habits or religious beliefs. Memplexes, short for meme-complexes, relate to a specific school of thought or subject influencing the ideologies of Homo sapiens. These memplexes fit people's existing mindset and can thrive for a long time.
- **Meme Marketing** refers to all the practices sellers, companies, and entities adopt in gaining attention, engaging the audience, communicating, and disseminating information through memes. As described by Ngo (2021, p. 1), "Meme Marketing (MM) is the practice of promoting a product or service using memes, an internet-based phenomenon involving viral

pieces of user-generated content, including images, articles, and video or audio clips.” Meme marketing involves tapping into trends, moments, and current affairs, and generating memes out of them. It is an emerging form of social media marketing.

- **Internet Memes:** Internet memes refer to digital artifacts comprising various media formats. They are utilized by companies for customer engagement and communication. They aid in cultivating a positive brand image, enhancing goodwill, and facilitating cost-effective marketing. Numerous examples, such as “Ache din” by Modi Sarkar and “Sakth Launda” by Zakhir Khan, highlight their prevalence, often stemming from viral events that prompt widespread sharing and discussion.

Purpose of the study

The objective of this research is to conduct a systematic review of current literature on memes and memetics, aiming to analyse their definitions, trace their evolution, and explore current and potential applications. Additionally, the study seeks to identify future research directions in this field. Subsequently, the following section delves deeply into the research methodology.

Research methodology

This paper endeavours to examine how the evolutionary trajectory of memes transpired, and to what extent they have been applied and can be used across varying domains. The research methodology adopted in this study is a systematic literature review of the existing papers and academic work. A systematic literature review assesses predefined research objectives by systematically gathering relevant literature through defining, planning, collecting, screening, and retaining papers meeting the study criteria (Moher et al., 2009). It ensures unbiased selection of the papers due to a meticulous process of selection and reporting (Petticrew & Roberts, 2008).

A research plan was put into action, taking the review process through different stages. The first stage was **planning**, which included activities like identifying the scope of the research and its objectives. The

second stage was **organizing**, which included activities like creating and organizing a pool of resources, including papers, books, theses, and articles important for the research. The third and final stage of the systematic literature review is **analysing** the resources collected and presenting a summary of the information synthesized from the review.

For conducting the review and reporting the findings, the PRISMA 2020 guideline for reporting systematic review was adopted (Page et al., 2021). PRISMA 2020 provides a step-by-step procedure and is divided into different stages, such as identification, screening, and inclusion, making it easier to gather resources. The initial phase involved searching and identifying resources using keyword searches across bibliographic databases including Springer, Emerald, SAGE, and DOAJ. Table 1 presents an overview of and the corresponding number of articles retrieved. Theses, deemed foundational for the paper, were also considered. A preliminary pool of 4,805 research articles was compiled, inclusive of keywords specified in Table 1, such as “Meme,” “Meme theory,” “Memetics,” and “Meme marketing.” Only open-accessed and peer-reviewed papers within the timeframe spanning from the 1960s to 2023 were included.

Once the articles had been identified, all the references of the identified articles were imported into Mendeley software. Duplicate records were removed from the pool of articles created, using the “check for duplicates” option in the tool menu in the Mendeley software. This reduced our article count to 2,829. In the next step of screening, few inclusion and exclusion criteria were used for filtering out the relevant papers. These criteria are mentioned in Table 2.

Subsequently, papers were assessed for accessibility, alignment with the study’s theme, and abstract relevance. Finally, through full text examination,

Table 1
Word search results on different databases

Word search	Emerald	Springer	DOAJ	SAGE
Meme	1000	781	614	335
“Meme” + “theory”	20	781	35	7
memetics	0	2	0	3
“Meme” + “marketing”	850	369	6	2

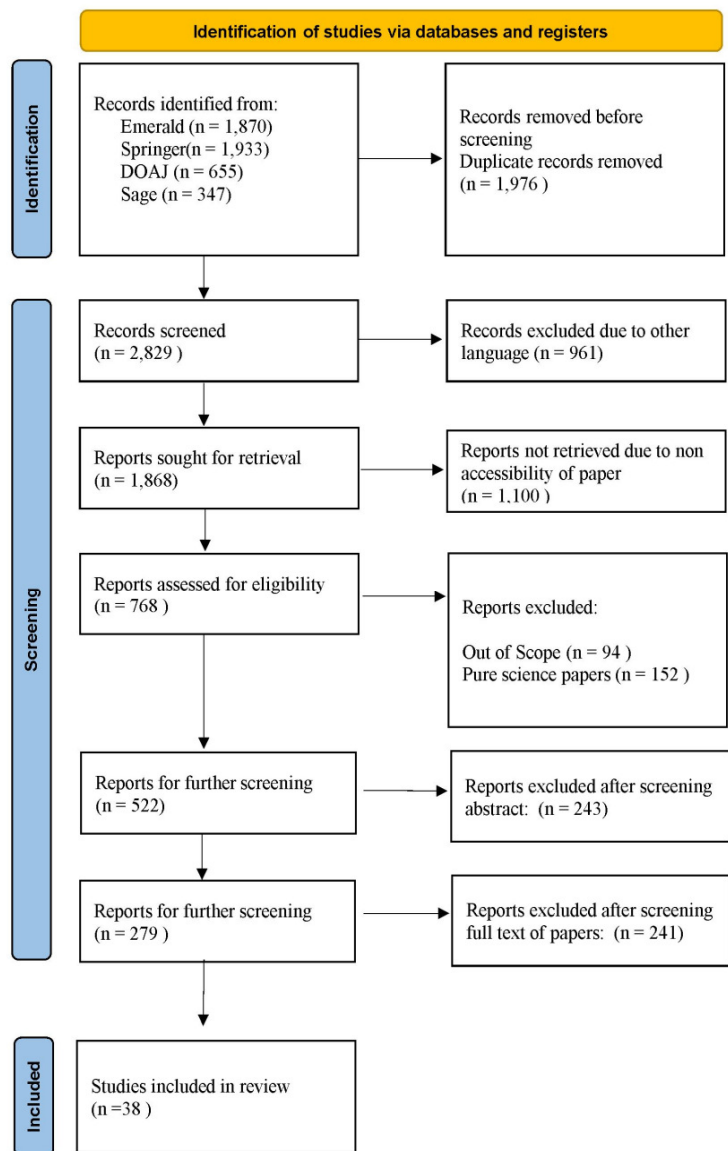
Source: authors’ own work.

Table 2
Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies on the topic, suggesting future research areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language other than English.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research articles, books, a thesis written in the English language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research paper on memes related to biology and other pure sciences.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on memetics and a meme application. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility of research paper.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on definitions and theoretical development of memes and memetics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essays, commentary papers, and summaries were excluded.

Source: authors’ own work.

Figure 1
Flow chart depicting the research process



Source: authors' own work. Guideline: "The PRISMA 2020 statement: an updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews", M. J. Page, J. E. McKenzie, P. M. Bossuyt, I. Boutron, T. C. Hoffmann, C. D. Mulrow, L. Shamseer, J. M. Tetzlaff, E. A. Akl, S. E. Brennan, R. Chou, J. Glanville, J. M. Grimshaw, A. Hróbjartsson, M. M. Lalu, T. Li, E. W. Loder, E. Mayo-Wilson, S. McDonald.... & D. Moher, 2021, *Systematic Reviews*, 10(1), 89 (<https://doi.org/10.1186/s13643-021-01626-4>).

38 studies were deemed pertinent in addressing the research questions. The studies included in this research highlight the scope of memes and chart their evolution and application in various domains. Figure 1 shows the PRISMA 2020 flow chart.

Result

Derived from the literature review, various definitions of memes and their usage, substantiating their evolutionary path, were identified. This segment explores different meme definitions and their applications across diverse fields.

Conceptual development of memes

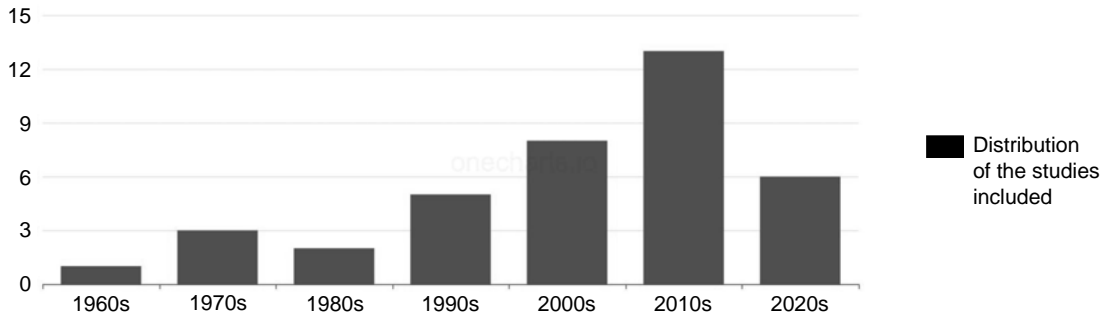
The review found uneven meme research progress. Despite introduction in 1976, substantial studies emerged in the late 2000s and early 2010s with the rise of internet memes. Figure 2 shows the distribu-

tion of 38 studies analysed in this research, spanning from the 1960s to the 2020s. Studies which illustrate memes' scope, evolution, and application across domains were included. This shows that a majority of studies are from the 2010s (13) and the 2000s (8), with a minimal number from the 1960s (1). In other decades, there were three studies from the 1970s, two from the 1980s, five from the 1990s, and six from the 2020s.

Although coined in 1976, similar concepts can be traced back in history to multiple occasions. For instance, in 1880, the Atlantic Monthly published William James' essay „Great men, great thoughts, and the environment,“ which addressed cultural and social change through meme-like entities (James, 2020). In 1904, the German Biologist Dr. Richard Semon used a similar term 'mneme' in his work 'Die mnemischen Empfindungen in ihren Beziehungen zu den Original-empfindungen'. He formulated a mneme theory in

Figure 2

Decade-wise distribution of studies (1960s–2020s)



Source: authors' own work.

which individuals encounter various stimuli, forming impressions or „engrams“ in their memory. Through repetitive stimuli, these engrams accumulate, shaping an individual's mneme, potentially influencing their behaviour (Semon, 1909). These engrams became memes in modern times.

Numerous authors have endeavoured to articulate definitions of memes to address the ambiguity of the term. A few authors stressed learning and sharing by replication and imitation as the basis for deciding

whether something can be categorized as a meme, and a few authors have gone beyond the inclusion criteria and considered “anything that can be the subject of an instance of experience“ as a meme (Gabora, 1997, p. 8).

Table 3 gives definitions created by some researchers who have shown a keen interest in the development of memetics as a subject. This table contains excerpts from original works, stating the year in which they were published.

Table 3

Definitions given by various experts

Name of the researcher	Work and year	Definition
Richard Dawkins	The Selfish Gene Dawkins, 2016	“Meme is a replicator, a noun that conveys the idea of a unit of cultural transmission, or a unit of imitation. Memes propagate themselves in the meme pool by leaping from brain to brain via a process which, in the broad sense, can be called imitation. Some examples of memes are tunes, ideas, catch-phrases, clothes fashions, and ways of making pots or of building arches.” (Dawkins, 2016, p. 192)
Daniel Dennet	Memes and the exploitation of imagination. Philosophy after Darwin, 1990.	“Memes are the name of any item of cultural evolution characterized by variation, heredity, and differential fitness.” (Dennet, 1990, p. 127)
John S. Wilkins	What's in a meme? Reflections from the perspective of the history and philosophy of evolutionary biology, 1998.	“A meme is the least unit of sociocultural information relative to a selection process that has favourable or unfavourable selection bias that exceeds its endogenous tendency to change.” (Wilkins, 1998, p. 21)
Susan Blackmore	Imitation and definition of meme, 1998.	“When you imitate someone else, something is passed on. This ‘something’ can be passed on again, and again and so take on a life of its own. We might call this thing as an idea, an instruction, a behaviour, a piece of information. Fortunately, there is a name to it ‘meme’.” (Blackmore, 1998, p. 160)
Henrik Bjarneskans, Bjarne Grønnevik and Anders Sandberg	The lifecycle of memes, 2008.	“A meme is a (cognitive) information-structure able to replicate using human hosts and to influence their behaviour to promote replication.” (Bjarneskans, Grønnevik & Sandberg, 2008, p. 128)
Gary Boyd	The Human agency of meme machines. An extended review of: Blackmore's The Meme Machine. A Memetics Compendium, 2008.	“Meme is a bounded set of modulations on any carrier which when received by an animal has by virtue of its configuration a high probability of being transduced into neuronal group and synapse threshold representations which result in effectively identical replications of the meme as outputted modulations on other carriers via other animals.” (Boyd, 2008, p. 256)

Source: authors' own work.

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The above table was created from various sources, including the work of Carlos Mauricio Castaño Díaz (2013), Dr. Robert Finkelstein (2008), Dr. Susan Blackmore (2000). From the definitions given, a meme is seen as a cultural information replicator that spreads through imitation and variation, including ideas, behaviours, or pieces of information. One meme is the story of Little Red Riding Hood, which has traversed geographical and temporal boundaries through oral communication and been adapted with slight variations into various forms such as movies, bedtime stories, images, audio-video compilations, and plays, enduring in the collective consciousness over time. Memes as a cognitive element influence behaviour for cultural replication, revealing complex cognition-behaviour dynamics. However, these definitions remain incomplete and warrant further consideration.

Application of Memes in various areas

Mememes and memetics can have applications in various areas. They can be a medium to stimulate consumer engagement (Ngo, 2021), further propagating brand image (Teng et al., 2022) and affordance-based brand awareness (Williams, 2000), eventually leading to the evolution of the brand (Wu & Ardley, 2007). Memes can be also used as a broadcasting tool, disseminating material of a political nature (Mukhongo, 2020); as a campaign aid for creating awareness around sociocultural issues (Iloh, 2021), as a tool for raising awareness of global health hazards such as COVID-19 (Msugheter, 2020) and as a linguistic persuasive tool providing vernacular flexibility (Caliandro & Anselmi, 2021).

In his work, 'Critique and defense of Memesis', researcher Onar Aam (2008) identified a list of areas where memetics should be applied and developed. These areas included phenomenology, behaviourist sciences, systems theory, communication theory, and cognitive sciences. He further stated that the list was

incomplete and would grow with time. In accordance with the above, figure 3 shows the areas identified following the systematic literature review. All these areas are discussed in this paper below.

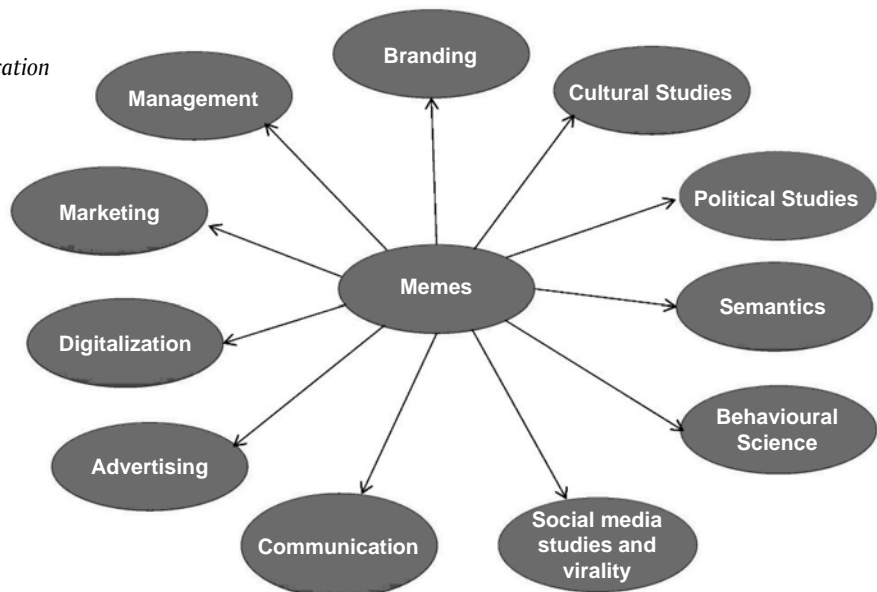
Major areas identified

- 1. Memes and Advertising:** Corporates can motivate social media users to generate and share content revolving around their brands. In a case study of Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) by Laestadius and Wahl (2017), it was observed that five percent of user-generated brand-related posts took the form of memes, indicating their potential for brand promotion. Besides user-generated content, corporates can opt for paid meme content available through trusted sites and platforms. This content is pre-designed according to the company's goals, objectives, and strategies. Hence, they have a high chance of becoming successful. Their quality, accessibility, and congruity increase online traffic and views, establishing credibility and reach (Wolk & Theysohn, 2007).
- 2. Memes and Communication:** Memes help in communicating and enhancing consumer engagement. Companies can share images and memes through their brands' pages or pages owned by others to connect with the users (Dolan et al., 2017). These companies can post memes related to their brands, accentuating brands' unique selling propositions, or they may combine the prevalent trends with their propositions and address the ethics, motos, and virtues that the company stands for. Either way, they can leverage the communication, situation, and perceptibility in their favour. They can also advocate in current affairs, national and global issues, and environmental issues.

Figure 3

Areas identified for meme application

Source: authors' own work.



3. **Memes and Digitalization:** Memes can be categorized and grouped on various bases (Langrish, 2008), such as appearance, combination, subject matter, medium, and underlying emotion. All these distinct memes can be converted into digital artifacts using the Internet. Subsequently, with the recent rise in internet usage and innovation, people's online participation has increased, leading to participatory culture and spreadable media (Mukhongo, 2020).
With memes getting popular, content creators can monetize from creating original memes. However, they must be aware of copyright and authorship policies (Soha & McDowell, 2016).
4. **Memes and Semantics:** Memes as a tool of expression rely on underlying emotions and themes to gain attention. Most memes are laced with humour (Mukhongo, 2020). Apart from humour, other themes commonly observed in memes are history, a motto, news, symbolism, and mythology (Hakoköngäs et al., 2020).
Memes allow users to modify the text, aesthetics, and context as they wish. They provide users with grammar and vernacular flexibility, leading to brand engagement (Caliandro & Anselmi, 2021). People like to follow a trend, and memes help them to be a part of one through modalities of slang, grammar, and textual combinations. They also lead to acceptance by persuasion by repeatedly iterating the same thing, using assertive language.
5. **Memes and Branding:** Marketers can deploy various online marketing strategies to grow their brands, including brand promotion through memes (Lim et al., 2016). Memetic brand posts, sharing similar templates and resonating with specific product experiences, foster brand awareness and affordance-based relationships (Caliandro & Anselmi, 2021). These posts, circulated within meme-based brand communities or pages, unite like-minded factions. Memetics analysis facilitates meaningful brand-customer connections by aligning brands with societal values (Marsden, 2002). For instance, meme-driven campaigns may associate brands with nationalism or philanthropy, tapping into consumer emotions and values.
6. **Memes and Social Media Studies:** Memes can be shared on various digital platforms, such as Twitter and Instagram, which increases their reach and allows them to become an in-joke or urban myth. An example of this was seen with the video meme 'Harlem Shake', which went viral on YouTube and Reddit (Soha & McDowell, 2016). Each platform has its own tools and purposes, making them unique for studying memetic-like artifacts, such as the case of Instagram (Caliandro & Anselmi, 2021). Further, most research papers cover only one or two social media platforms rather than taking a comprehensive approach, thus suggesting the need for further research.
- a. **Memes and Virality:** Memes are a complex type of contagion that can spread like a disease in communities (Weng et al., 2013). A variety of measures, including community concentration, reinforcement (Weng et al., 2013), image composition, subject, and audience (Ling et al., 2021), potentially impact their virality. Psychological factors, like brain hardwiring and adaptation to evolution, can explain memetic success, with potential applications in business, fashion, and advertising.
7. **Memes and Cultural Studies:** Memes are considered a unit of cultural transmission. They are the means through which languages, rituals, and customs have thrived and stayed with human beings for so long. Jokes, urban legend, folklore, and native lullabies result from spreading of memes (Lord, 2012). They are the reason behind the norms of behaviour. Memes enable collective coping, initiate social movements, and serve as an aid for cultural transformation. Memes help in mitigating stress and bringing society together in difficult times. People can demonstrate their emotions, especially fear and doubt. They are a safe space to share (Flecha Ortiz et al., 2021).
8. **Memes and Behavioural Science:** Memes can be used to understand consumer behaviour. They are like an entity that is passed on by imitation. People generally imitate each other's behaviour. Marketers should study this imitating behaviour in creating new products and demands, which are sometimes based on copying and following the trend instead of making conscious choices (Marsden, 2008). Memes and memetics are developing paradigms, and more investigation of their role in understanding customer behaviour is required (Williams, 2002).
9. **Memes and Political Studies:** Memes can convey political thoughts and ideas. They indulge in bitter humour or sarcasm to spread information through the poly-vocal structure of the Internet (Hakoköngäs et al., 2020). They can create political pressure through continuous persuasion and motivate individuals to take part in expressing political opinions, sharing political meme-based posts, standing in political contestations, and supporting online protests (Mukhongo, 2020).
10. **Memes and Marketing:** Many researchers like Paul Marsden and Russell Williams hinted at the use of memes in marketing and business decision-making. Memes can supplement relationship marketing strategies and electronic word of mouth (Kurultay, 2012). Local businesses can also utilize marketing through memes and increase their reach by tapping into local iconicity. *Iconicity* refers to the harmony and cohesiveness between the meme's text, image, form, and meaning. However, caution is advised while collaborating on the right meme in the right context conveying the right words to increase the chance of positive consumer reactions (Ngo, 2021).

11. **Mememes and Management:** Mememes are an innovative tool that businesses should adopt to mimic and promote the best practices at all levels of the organization (Pech, 2003). Good conduct and performance can be fostered using mememes, and they can be pro-biotic or life-saving, but should also be handled carefully in order to avoid hurting the organization's image, product, sales, and profit. Meme study can also help manage organizational change (Lord, 2012).

Discussion

Mememes have the power to revolutionize the world in many ways. They are all-pervasive. Therefore, it is essential to understand their ambit. Through this paper, the attempt has been made to study, analyse, and contribute to the field of mememes and memetics. Their origin, definitions, conceptual development, and usage in various areas are noted.

Researchers have recognized mememes' potential as marketing tools, essential for branding strategies to shape company images and influence consumer behaviour and perception. They carry cultural, behavioural, and miscellaneous knowledge from one generation to another. They help to preserve a long-established modus operandi, the accepted social conduct, and the civilities one is expected to observe. For instance, all eating habits, rituals, cultural customs, languages, and scientific notions are passed on only through these knowledge bytes. They can be preserved in scriptures, journals, and books, or followed as a practice and imparted to future generations.

Moreover, they can also be used to promulgate information of a political and social nature. This can consequently help in change management through adoption of desired behaviour, which can lead to the implementation of commendatory practices at the office and bring organizational change.

Future of Mememes and memetics

The future of mememes and memetics appears bright. Mememes have taken over websites, social media platforms, chats, and conversations. This small and contagious idea has become part of our lives. From websites like knowyourmeme.com, which acts as a meme cloud, to a billionaire like Mr. Elon Musk, CEO of Tesla Motors, supporting the cause and importance of mememes by commenting on the following tweet through his Twitter handle, on 26 June, 2020, "Who controls the mememes controls the universe", increasing the gravity of the situation. The following paragraphs briefly discuss the future of mememes.

Mememes can be considered as a display of 'Modern Art'. Numerous Non-Fungible Tokens (NFT) have been used for them, and are for sale in the NFT market. A Non-Fungible Token is a blockchain based digital object. These digital affordances come with a digital certificate of ownership (Chalmers et al., 2022). In the coming years, the world will witness an increase in meme-based NFT trade.

The future will bring blockchain integration in mememes, emergence of meme-based cryptocurrencies, a rise in market capitalization, use of mememes as NFTs, and evolution into a contemporary art form. This growth fosters memetics as both a science and art, necessitating comprehensive research to establish its epistemological, scope, and scientific foundation.

Mememes are inching towards becoming a feedback collection mechanism, as they provide an easy and jocular way to convey information. They will soon be used as part of a questionnaire or survey, collecting feedback, opinions, thoughts, and suggestions in a playful manner (Iloh, 2021).

There will be a surge in the number of political, social, art-based, cultural, corporate, advertising, and marketing meme-based campaigns. All these developments would entail the establishment of a code of ethics, rules, and legal framework for limiting any sort of discrimination through meme or meme-based entities.

The future of mememes will witness and mandate the requirement and adoption of the following actions for a stable meme-enabled world:

1. Setting of advertising standards for meme-based marketing and communication.
2. Adoption of meme marketing and meme marketing plans by big and small organizations.
3. Development of means to measure the reach and engagement level of a meme, in short, to measure and analyse the return on investment of a meme.
4. Regulation of meme-based coins by enacting laws and adopting acts defining the memorandum for meme-based cryptocurrencies.
5. Provision of institutional and infrastructural support for creation, circulation, and encashment through meme and meme-based entities.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the evolution of the term 'meme' from its simple origins to a complex phenomenon underscores its multifaceted nature, as evidenced by its diverse interpretations. The synthesis of meme definitions highlights their profound role as conveyors of information, sustained by imitation and variation. This research has pinpointed key traits for meme longevity and identified diverse formats like ideas, slogans, audio, and tweets. They wield a significant influence on human behaviour. Additionally, the investigation of mememes as online phenomena and their incorporation into marketing strategies has underscored their widespread influence on modern society. Furthermore, the elucidation of concepts such as memetics, memplexes, and meme marketing has broadened our comprehension of the far-reaching implications and practical applications of mememes in diverse contexts.

This study highlights mememes' immense potential, spanning diverse fields such as management and semantics. With versatile applications, mememes engage consumers, enhance brands, broadcast political

messages, drive sociocultural awareness campaigns, and persuade linguistically with cultural adaptability, impacting various facets of human life across cultural, social, political, business, religious, and behavioural realms.

The study infers that a solid foundation needs to be established in this field to facilitate future scholars' comprehension of its fundamentals. This systematic review serves to delineate the scope of a meme, representing a comprehensive effort to enrich and expand upon the theoretical framework of this burgeoning area of study.

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