

# **USER-GENERATED IMAGES AND MEMES ON 'COVID-19'**

## **USELESS OR INFORMATIVE?**

Francis Atu

It is so relaxing and entertaining to scroll over memes and many graphical representation during your resting time with your phone or laptop while lying on your bed or relaxing on your cushion, laughing over them and discovering how creative people can be and how thinking that your ideas could work. Also trying to figure out or derive meanings out of those images, especially those memes. The whole ideas of the memes and how it is being portrayed amuses you and you laugh so hard even though some will think 'they're just using this whole pandemic to crack jokes and create funny contents', but the whole amusement is when you find out the information each different memes carry. You'll keep smiling and scrolling, wanting to see more.

A lot of people, especially serious-minded people say that this whole covid-19 is taken for granted and instead of letting people know what to do during this time of panic, they are busy creating memes and laughing over it. Some aged ones will say the young ones are not mindful of what can happen to them as they are laughing and finding those memes interesting (they bombard and try to scare those seeing the memes with certain superstitions). Some say these memes actually spread information to people who try to understand them better than long written news on these cases. They say the graphical method of passing information is widely spread and understood better. Some doctors say they have told people ways to wash their hands and use hand sanitizers, but they have not been getting what they've been saying but with the use of images, people have adopted those methods easily, especially the illiterates.

But the images and the funny memes we see concerning the covid-19 are in fact a hundred percent informative. There are lots of funny memes which would make you and at the same time make you have a second thought and inform you of different things happening with different people around. You will find out you could relate to most of these memes and find them so accurate. There are images which would portray the virus as a human being which is scary chasing a cartoon character and a life hand sanitizer chasing the virus and they go in that cycle. They will portray these characters in such a funny way so as to capture the mind of the viewers, cause that's what attracts people and not some boring long write-ups. You will find out that in those funny images with the whole funny representation there is a strong meaning to it. Like in the illustration where the hand sanitizer is running towards the virus and the virus running towards the normal individual, it is simply saying as the virus is able to harm the individual, so does it have something which would do a harm to it also(which is the hand sanitizer). This a strong information which needs to be given to a lot of people and is done through a most captivating manner, of course it will get to a whole lot of audience than just simple writing.

I spoke to Rahila Atu, she said "I have discovered a lot through these memes and images which talk about people's situation, I saw an image which was showing the virus on the left and on its door there was an inscription indicating outside, and on the right was another door and a man who's known as hunger and on his door was 'inside' and in between these two doors was a whole family (a father, mother and a child), the drawings looked so funny but looking closely at it explained so much about the family. They needed to go out in search of food because if they stay indoors they would die of hunger and if they should go out they would be attacked by the virus." These images as we can see have lots of information attached to them and should not be criticized. She said "even as we laugh over them, we should learn to drag out the information they are trying to pass, because I have not come across any meme which does not have a meaning to it even though they are mostly funny."

I also spoke to Fredrick Atu, who is still a teenager who doesn't not really find so much interest in watching news channels or reading the papers. He said he has seen many funny images and memes which have given him an idea of how dangerous the virus can be and in fact how they can be prevented and other things to do during this quarantine. We can see that just through these images a lot have been taught to someone who does not watch news channels or read news papers.

Why use funny memes and images instead of sending written messages and forwarding those messages through the social media?

Of course we know that through graphical representation, certain explanation and theories are understood better more. Besides that, images and memes capture the mind of the audience other than a long writing. I know people would say short straightforward can just be sent through the social media instead of those memes, but we know that the social media is opened to everyone and could be used to send messages to a lot of people. There are lots of fake news which are spread through the social media, and people find it difficult to differentiate which one is correct and which is wrong. But you hardly see memes which pass out the wrong information. People who want to spread fake news would not go to the stress of making memes and even if a person should go through that stress, it is rare and would be noticed because of how the information wouldn't tally with the others.

Well, these images have really made me understand certain things, especially presenting the ways which the covid-19 could be prevented very easy with just a few illustrations on images, memes and even snapchat filters. Before seeing those images, I've seen many write ups on how to prevent the virus and at times they do not make it look easy. But with these images and memes it just looks so easy. The snapchat filters are even more interesting, someone would take a picture and put a filter with ways to prevent the virus, and how to even wash your hands.

Instead of trying to condemn images and memes, we should try to look at a couple and we would find out that in fact we could relate to most of the things the memes and images are talking about. There are lots of things said to us through long messages which we would mis-interpret, but just looking at some images we would understand better and accurately. We should go through those funny memes especially, so that as we are picking information from it, we could also laugh and ease a

little bit of the tension and the fear. We should not just keep watching the news only which might just keep us in the FEAR ZONE other than being in the LEARNING ZONE and the GROWTH ZONE which would be of help to the society, to me and to you as well.

Why would you like to see memes and images during this boring quaranting?

It is so relaxing and entertaining to scroll over memes and many graphical representation during your resting time with your phone or laptop while lying on your bed or relaxing on your cushion, laughing over them and discovering how creative people can be and how thinking that your ideas could work. Also trying to figure out or derive meanings out of those images, especially those memes. The whole ideas of the memes and how it is being portrayed amuses you and you laugh so hard even though some will think 'they're just using this whole pandemic to crack jokes and create funny contents', but the whole amusement is when you find out the information each different memes carry. You'll keep smiling and scrolling, wanting to see more.

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