

# Two Face Personality in Identity Falsification and Catfishing Behavior on Online Dating Tinder

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## Two Face Personality in Identity Falsification and Catfishing Behavior on Online Dating Tinder

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### ABSTRACT

This research stems from using online dating, originally used to make it easier for users to find friends, relationships, or partners. However, online dating is often used to practice catfishing or identity fraud. This phenomenon arises as an implication of the ease of creating more than one personal account, which is used as a reflection of the identity that the perpetrator wants to display. This topic is related to the theme of computer-mediated communication (CMC), which allows individuals to communicate asynchronously, which makes it easier for perpetrators to find victims. This research aims to find out the experiences of catfishing perpetrators and how they interpret the experience of doing so. This research uses the phenomenological method, where each informant constructs meaning through their intersubjective side. Data collection techniques were conducted through in-depth interviews to obtain results from a first-person perspective. The results of this research describe the experience of catfishing perpetrators interacting and finding victims in online dating applications. In addition, the research also found that the perpetrators interpreted their catfishing practice not only as the fulfillment of sexual desires but also as the fulfillment of desires that are not in the real world (wanting to be praised, recognized, and have a sense of pride). The experiences and meanings of the research subjects reflect modernity and the fulfillment of sexual desires online. Unlike several previous studies, this phenomenological research can see the depth of the essence of catfishing behavior because it uses original data extracted from the perpetrator's experience (first party).

**Keywords:** catfishing, online dating, phenomenology.

## INTRODUCTION

Today's common phenomenon on social networking sites (SNS) is online identity fraud or fake identity. These false identities can arise from mistakes in self-portraits, which can subconsciously make a person a perpetrator on social networks. Identity forgery is the act of someone using someone else's identity online. These online identity forgery perpetrators commonly use social media platforms to impersonate others. They use fake identities to build trust with potential victims (Nurdin, 2021).

Identity fraud in online dating applications is known as catfishing. This term first appeared in a documentary by Henri Joost and Ariel Schulman in the United States in 2010. The documentary outlines stories of people victimized in relationships using fake identities (Dijck, 2013).

SNS is a web service that allows a person to create a public or semi-public account or profile and create a list of friends with other SNS users (Shi et al., 2020). Users can appear and simultaneously connect to networks, developing and maintaining relationships with other users. In that context, violations often arise, one of the most frequent of which is catfishing.

This offense can occur due to the ease with which a person can create multiple accounts, allowing them to present different identities. This behavior can be categorized as fraud because it is related to forgery, pretending to be a new person, or someone else in the virtual world (Smith et al., 2017). It can be defined as deception through false words, using false names, or situations. It creates a situation that makes the victim give up what they have. The victim will receive an impact in the form of physical, financial, and physical losses (Rusmana, 2015).

Catfishing is the act of someone in the position of a sender to hide their true identity from the recipient (Tsikerdekis dan Zeadally, 2015). The goals vary, such as the desire to have an identity, reputation, or relationship with a particular person.

Research conducted by Kaspersky, as reported by Suara.com, states that catfishing is the most common thing encountered by users of online dating applications (51%). In addition, identity theft is also often found (17%). However, 50% of online dating users claim to have successfully detected this behavior by tracking the digital footprint of the allegedly fake profile (Dythia, 2021).

This online identity fraud can take three forms—first, concealment, removal, or alteration of identity. Second, identity theft is committed to replace or eliminate the original identity. Third, creating a new identity and building a newer digital track record (Tsikerdekis dan Zeadally, 2015). Technological developments that impact social networking sites (SNS) result in the frequent occurrence of this kind of identity fraud.

Digital technology has made social interactions undergo major changes. The

advent of smartphones and the internet has allowed people to communicate through SNS easily and quickly. People no longer need face-to-face meetings to interact or solve problems, but simply through smartphones (Irianingsih et al., 2018). This change in communication methods and media will certainly also affect the communication experience, which can occur because of the communication activities in it (Nurtyasrini dan Hafiar, 2016).

In other words, communication experience can not only be experienced through face-to-face interaction and digital communication media, including SNS. Interaction or communication can be built through SNS, forming different communication experiences and meanings for each person. This is the starting point of this research, which is related to the experiences and meanings of catfishing actors in online dating. Online dating is a relationship established on social networks that is possible due to the development of communication technology (Putra, 2020).

The growth and development of SNS have influenced relationships that occur on online dating sites. Psychologically, this happens because people tend to have romantic relationships and obtain a partner who is considered the best. Indonesia's most popular online dating apps are Tinder, Tantan, Ok Cupid, Badoo, BestTalk, and Taaruf (Dailysocial, 2021). According to Rakuten Insight research, these apps are widely used in Indonesia. Tantan, for example, is used by about 33.9% of users in Indonesia, Taaruf ID 17.2%, OkCupid 18.8%, BestTalk 13%, Grindr 12.15%, Setipe 10.66%, Bermuda 8.93%, Coffee Meets Bagel 8.12% and Paktor 3.72% (Databooks, 2021).

Tinder is the most popular online dating app, assembled by Sean Read, Jonathan Badinm, and Justin in Westwood, California, United States (Putri, 2015). Referring to businessofapps.com, users of this application increased by 17.07% in the second quarter of 2021. Tinder is estimated to have 9.6 million customers (Databooks, 2022).

In Indonesia, Tinder became better known and used during the Covid-19 pandemic because this application makes users who want to find a date or partner do not need to do it face-to-face. This is where many negative problems arise on Tinder. The Jakpat survey, for example, stated that 21.53% of research respondents had a bad experience with Tinder (Mashita, 2017).

When conducting initial observations or searches on Tinder, several users appear to look for victims with various purposes when catfishing. One of them is the purpose of looking for opportunities to have a one-night stand or get friends with benefits. Researchers also found several Tinder accounts that displayed photos with their faces blurred, and in the status column, they wrote: "Need FWB/ONS, chat directly."

Tinder is interesting to study because the intensity of using fake identities is

higher than other applications. In other social media, the account's authenticity can still be tracked or detected by looking at the number of likes, followers, comments, or the interaction of the account owner with his followers. While on Tinder, the only thing that can be seen is the personal information registered by the account owner.

This study is concerned with computer-mediated communication (CMC), which is the interaction that occurs in social networks. What is studied in this research is the process of communication mediated by computer networks, or the delivery and reception of messages between individuals facilitated by computer networks. Therefore, referring to the descriptions above, this research aims to examine and describe the experiences of catfishing perpetrators and how they interpret their experiences.

To analyze this phenomenon, this research uses the perspective of social penetration theory developed by Irwing Altman and Dalmis Taylor. According to this theory, the intimacy that a person experiences with another person can develop and grow gradually to form a more intense relationship with another person. The researcher will explore the catfishing perpetrator's experience using a false identity to communicate with victims to achieve their goals (West & Tuner, 2010).

Social penetration theory can be analogous to peeling an onion, where individuals peel several layers of other people's personal information through interpersonal communication until reaching the deepest layer. Getting to that deepest layer takes time and process. The deepest layer of human information is personality or identity, which is only revealed to people considered important, bypassing the introduction stage to the intimate stage (Permassanty & Irawan, 2018).

Previous research related to identity fraud and catfishing was conducted by Nurdin (2021), Retnowati (2015), and Dewi dan Irwansyah (2021). Although these studies have different objectives, they both discover the interaction process on Tinder related to catfishing behavior, exposing the weaknesses of online relationship interactions that can lead to cybercrime (love scammer). Other research conducted by Irianingsih, Sudardi, dan Rais (2018), and Ayun (2018) aims to discover the influence of smartphones that results in changes in social interactions and one's identity. Specifically related to Tinder, research has been conducted by Ferdiana, Susanto, dan Aulia (2020), Putri (2015), Fridha dan Octavianti (2016), Annisarizki (2018), and Nayiroh (2021) which aims to determine the motives for using online dating applications to find a partner, as well as the shift in the function of using Tinder which results in promiscuity.

Based on these studies, the researcher developed a topic related to the experiences of catfishing perpetrators and how they interpret their actions on Tinder. There has not been much research on this topic because previous research

discusses the interaction process, how to hide identity, the disadvantages of interacting over the internet, or discuss legal policies.

This research takes a different position from previous research that tends to look at this phenomenon through the eyes of the subject. This position makes these studies tend to be judgmental and need help to reach the depth of the essence behind catfishing. On the other hand, this study takes the opposite position (using phenomenological methods) from the perpetrator's perspective. This position allows researchers to understand the depth of the essence of catfishing behavior more deeply because what is described is the experience and meaning of the perpetrators themselves.

This research uses the phenomenological method. According to Husserl, phenomenology is the study of individuals' knowledge or understanding of the events they experience (Moleong, 2019). Phenomenology focuses on human awareness of their experiences; understanding of phenomena can occur if individuals directly experience an event and interpret their experiences (Kriyantono, 2020). From the experts' explanation above, this phenomenological research delves deeper into personal understanding and experience of the experiences that have been experienced. With phenomenology, researchers can understand the experiences of catfishing actors in their activities.

The subjects of this research are catfishing actors on Tinder. The researcher chose two informants with the criteria of having used the online dating application Tinder who used photos or information different from their real identity and had communicated with potential victims using a fake identity more than once. The following are the research subjects:

**Table 1. Research Subjects**

NO	NAME	AGE	JOB	DESCRIPTION
1	Doni (pseudonym)	22	-	Active in online dating for two years and catfished over 30 victims.
2	Axel (pseudonym)	21	Paralegal	Played online dating for three years and committed identity fraud against six people until the one-night stand stage.

Source: researcher processing

In-depth interviews were conducted concerning the three stages of phenomenological interviewing (Seidman, 2006): 1) Focused Life History, the interviewer asked the informant to talk as much as possible about themselves according to the research topic. The researcher let the informant tell the full story

of his life when using a fake online identity and the beginning of using Tinder; 2) The Details of Experience, asking for more details and details of the informant's life experience according to the research topic related to the catfishing perpetrator's experience in committing online identity fraud on the Tinder application; 3) Reflection on the Meaning, asking the meaning formed by informants from their experiences. The researcher reflects on the meaning of the informant's experience, where experience can shape a person.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Phenomenology is characterized by using epoche during interviews. The goal is to avoid data bias (Kuswarno, 2009). In this case, the researcher tries to be neutral and put aside all the experiences and knowledge that the researcher has. After that, the researcher arranged and organized the data. The horizontalization process carried out by researchers aims to develop themes called imaginative variations. This process resulted in three parts.

First, it describes the subjects' experiences of catfishing on Tinder or how the online application makes it easier for the perpetrators to interact and get victims. Second, it outlines how the perpetrators interpreted their catfishing behavior. Third, it outlines how the catfishing phenomenon reflects modernity and the fulfillment of sexual desires online.

### Catfishing Experiences on Online Dating Apps

Doni's first introduction to Tinder was from a friend he met on the video chat app. Two of his friends are male and live in Jakarta; his friend with the initials D works at state-owned PT Waskita and is very wealthy, as well as his other friend. The two friends are in their 30s; because of their compatibility in telling stories, they have become friends until now, and Doni admits that he has met and gone to Jakarta to meet them.

Doni's two friends had already played the Tinder app using fake names and profiles to find women to sleep with. Seeing this, Doni wanted to try it because of his curiosity, plus at that time, he admitted that he was bored after coming home from work and had no job, so he downloaded Tinder. This happened in 2021, which began his introduction to Tinder.

"Tinder is easy to fake compared to other social media like IG because Tinder is the one who enters our profile info; now, if IG or Facebook, you can see whose friends are following, and then the comments are so obvious if they are fake, it's different from Tinder." (Doni, October 25, 2022).

Doni uttered this quote as a catfishing offender. He sees online dating Tinder as different from social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, where the three social media fall into the type of media sharing networks

where there is a list of friends and can publish several photos and can interact with followers through the comments column, which is easily seen by others. In contrast to Tinder, there is only profile account information where the account owner creates the information, there is no friend list nor comment column, so it is very minimal to know the authenticity of a Tinder profile account.

This shows that Tinder, a social media, makes it easier for catfishing perpetrators to become anyone, even someone far from their reality, such as changing gender or profile photos. Social media has become a medium for forming virtual social bonds where users can present themselves and communicate with other users using the virtual identity that is formed (Nasrullah, 2017). Most online identities are not real, and often the identity displayed is to cover aspects of identity such as gender and age (Mcquail, 2011). Indirectly, catfishing perpetrators show a personality with two faces (identities), one shown by the virtual identity formed when communicating virtually, and the other face (identity) used in the real world when communicating with their environment in reality, or researchers call it a two-face personality.

Creating a Tinder profile to look attractive is the main key to getting victims. The first way is that the profile photo on the Tinder account must look like a "rich" guy, so Doni borrowed his friend's car and took a photo in the car showing Doni's face and used the photo as Doni's Tinder account profile photo, even Doni himself could not drive a car. The second is to use the latest smartphone photo.

"The most effective way is the profile photo, so when I went to Jakarta to meet my friend, he had a Ferrari car, so I asked for the keys, and I took a photo inside and showed my face, besides that I also sometimes use the latest smartphone photos so I just take it on Facebook and set it as a profile photo, there must be a match." (Doni, October 25, 2022).

Doni's interpretation shows a relationship with his self-presentation that is different from his real self. The self-presentation that he wants to show is the impression of being "rich." As Goffman stated, most individuals try to present themselves positively. On SNS and online dating, individuals show themselves using visual displays (photos) and written text rather than speaking directly. Individuals can apply several forms of self-presentation based on the purpose and type of media used, and often individuals manipulate their self-presentation to reduce rejection so that they can selectively show different sides in cyberspace and reality (Attrill, 2015). Similarly, the catfishing perpetrator Doni presented himself as a rich-looking figure through his profile picture.

It is not only the profile picture that is important, but the writing of the status also plays an important role by describing Doni's Tinder account that he is a widower, because according to him, if it is for "playing around" not to find a



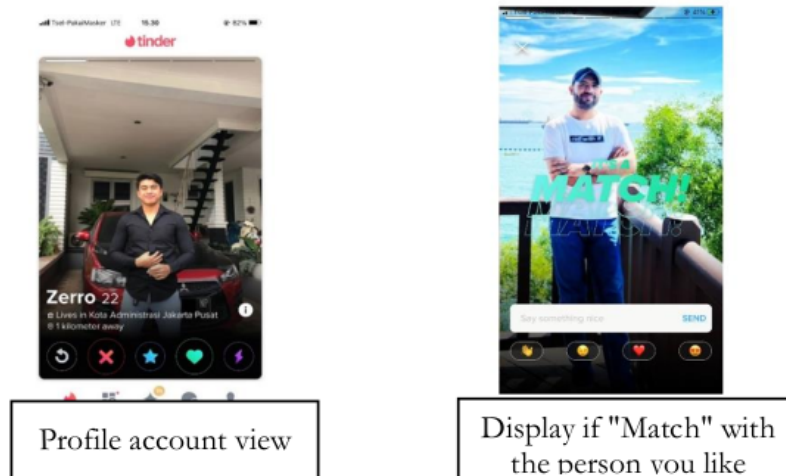
real partner, it is easier with the status of "widower." By recognizing himself as a widower, the victims who are approached can easily get closer to him. Based on Doni's confession, he can sell "sad" stories, such as saying that his wife has died and has one child, so that the victims have the impression that Doni is a good person and look sorry because of the sad stories told.

"So I made my status a widower because if you want to be strange, it's easier to claim to be a widower, and vice versa; if you want to find a real partner, a widower looks bad, then I also said that my wife died and had one child because someone asked, that was also my tactic so that they felt sorry." (Doni, October 25, 2022).

Online dating is one example of CMC activities because online dating can be seen as a form of communication so anyone can meet new people mediated by internet sites designed to find a partner. The weaknesses of CMC, especially in online dating, can be seen in Doni's confession of selling sad stories to gain trust from victims, namely minimal nonverbal signs because individuals do not interact directly (face to face). The asynchronous nature of CMC because computers mediate it, CMC is not directly connected (Sari & Kusuma, 2018).

On the other hand, CMC allows individuals to communicate asynchronously because they can think about how to respond to display a positive self-presentation according to their goals. Asynchronous communication also allows users to create, edit, and display an idealized side of themselves, as asynchronous can provide time to think and choose what can be done to get what the individual wants (Attrill, 2015). This, for example, can be seen in the following image.

Figure 1: The Different view on Tinder



Profile account view

Display if "Match" with the person you like

Source: researcher processed.

The image above shows the difference in appearance on the offender's account. The photo differs from when they found a match with the person they liked. This reinforces the researcher's finding that the lack of nonverbal cues and the asynchronous nature of CMC on Tinder and Whatsapp allow catfishing perpetrators to easily tell various lies and mask their true identity during communication. By doing so, they can deceive dozens of women to get their way.

Unlike Doni, Axel does not have specific criteria for his Tinder profile account. The name and age used by Axel are fake. For the status/caption on the Tinder profile, Axel himself has tactics to lure these women, one of which is with a flirtatious or seductive status. As for the numbers used to communicate with these women, they use private numbers. Axel said that if he chatted via WA, he would admit his real name to gain the potential victim's trust because, according to Axel, if he did not, it would be difficult for the potential victim to give trust and comfort.

"I don't have any tactics, but I usually write flirts in my Tinder status to get them interested." (Axel, October 26, 2022).

After getting a Whatsapp number from Tinder and chatting with the victim, usually the first two to three days, Axel gives many compliments such as "you are beautiful" both from chat and video call/telephone, in general, to build trust and closeness with the victim and also make flirts. Another tactic is to say that Axel rarely opens WA and rarely chats with other women to get the impression that only one woman (the victim) is being approached. Another tactic was to say Axel had never been in a relationship before and made an oath to the victim, so the victim immediately believed what Axel said.

This is in line with the weakness of CMC that the lack of verbal cues and asynchronous nature makes it easier for catfishing perpetrators to communicate and influence victims without having to meet face to face. This can be seen when Axel writes a "flirtatious" caption/status to look attractive and then gives compliments via chat so the victim feels special and trusts him. Meanwhile, Doni shows himself through a profile picture that gives the impression of high socioeconomic status. Online communication through text (chat) is very influential in creating identity by creating an image and forming an impression of themselves through text (writing) (Attrill, 2015). This is what Axel and Doni did when communicating with the victim. Only through chat he could make the victim trust him by showing a virtual identity.

Also, through computer-mediated communication (CMC), the intensity to show a real identity is easier to manipulate by showing an ideal identity. Without realizing it, Doni & Axel's self-representation reflects acquisitive self-presentation. The concept initiated by Irving Goffman states that two self-presentation

strategies can be used to manipulate, including protective self-presentation, which individuals commonly use to avoid disapproval from others by showing neutral and ordinary self-presentation. Meanwhile, acquisitive self-presentation is used when individuals want to gain recognition from others through positive self-presentation (Attrill, 2015). This is what researchers found in Axel and Doni, where when they want to get victims, they always say good things to get the impression that they can be trusted and are good people; Doni and Axel are not as they are said or told.

Through the experiences and meanings of the two informants in this study, namely Axel and Doni, researchers can conclude that the development of social media opens up opportunities, especially on online dating Tinder itself, allowing Catfishing perpetrators to create and manipulate their identities to achieve their goals. Individuals tend to create and manipulate other versions of their real selves online to get the desired response according to their goals or needs (Attrill, 2015).

### **Catfishing Interpreted as a Quest for Pride and Recognition**

At school, Doni is a student who does not like to socialize if he is not interested because he thinks not everyone can accept him and is afraid that he will hurt his friends. During his time at SMK, he rarely went to school because the distance between his school and home was very far. After all, Doni lived in Gresik, and his SMK was located in Surabaya. Doni only has one best friend from his childhood until now, and Doni is very open with his best friend, especially about being a catfisher on Tinder.

"To be honest, I'm shy with new people; it's really hard to get along with people; I'm even more comfortable with chatting than meeting in person."  
(Doni, October 25, 2022)

Doni admits he is shy, more comfortable communicating virtually, and needs to improve his speaking when meeting people in person. This is one of the factors that Doni does not want to meet his victims and chooses only through video calls. Research by Morahan-Martin and Schumacher (2000) states that the problems that occur in CMC are online anonymity and the possibility of playing identity (Thurlow et al., 2004). Based on the experience of Doni, he seems to be an anti-social child. He is more comfortable with virtual communication with his victims from the beginning of the search for victims until Doni's goal is achieved, all done virtually.

Based on researcher observations, Doni, who tends to be shy and has difficulty opening up to others, shows that Doni is comfortable with his virtual identity so that he is more able to show himself and can achieve his goals online. This is in line with what Daniel Chandler said in (Thurlow et al., 2004) that the internet and technology open up opportunities for identity formation where

individuals can change themselves to become what they want. The virtual world provides a wide space for individuals to present themselves and be creative to become the desired figure (Retnowati, 2015).

"The main factor is the environment, especially friends; if my environment is not like this, I don't think I would have played Tinder or anything like this until now." (Doni, October 25, 2022)

As explained in the previous sub-chapter, Doni first learned about Tinder from his two friends who played Tinder and had already played the Tinder application by using fake names and profiles to find women to sleep with. Seeing this, Doni wanted to try it because of his curiosity, plus at that time, he admitted that he was bored after coming home from work and did not have a job, so he downloaded Tinder. This happened in 2021, the beginning of his exposure to Tinder.

The friendship environment is very influential on Doni's behavior; before knowing Tinder, Doni had also used drugs in 2019, Doni intended to become a DJ, and he joined the DJ community in Surabaya. As a result of the nightlife he went through and his intention to become a DJ, he followed his DJ friends to try drugs because if you want to become a DJ, you have to consume these things. Doni consumed drugs for a year, every two or three months, only consuming two to three times. Doni admitted that he did this because of his environment, not because of family or romantic problems.

Doni initially aimed to perform VCS and screenshot/screen-record the victim's intimate body parts. After doing the VCS and Doni had succeeded in getting what he wanted, namely screenshotting/screen recording the victim's body parts, he immediately blocked the victim's WA number without saying anything. When he got this, he shared the video/photo with his two friends in the same group to prove to his friends that he had managed to get a nude photo of the victim. He did this because sometimes his friends challenged Doni to see if he could get a naked photo of the woman, and both of Doni's friends also did the same thing, sharing naked photos of the woman they had slept with. By sharing with the group, Doni felt proud and felt that he was recognized because he could meet the challenges of his friends.

Society is a collection of various individuals who live together and socialize. In it, there are agents of socialization that influence individuals in their lives and actions; one is a friendship group that allows individuals to learn to behave and behave equally, both in age and in life experience. Through this peer environment, individuals learn values and norms that are not from their families (Normina, 2014). In Doni's case, it can be seen that the friendship group has a huge influence on his behavior, seen from knowing and using drugs because of his friend and

knowing Tinder, whose purpose is not to find a life partner but for sexual things because of his friend. There is a sense of pride and pleasure when Doni can get his wish and show his friend because there is no need to spend material capital or losses experienced to get his satisfaction for free or can be said to be "free."

"Initially, I played Tinder because I tried it because I saw an ad on Youtube, from idle, and the second factor was because I was bored because I only kept the shop, and in Medan, I rarely made friends. So I tried to play swipe right swipe left." (Axel, October 26, 2022).

The second informant, Axel, first learned about Tinder in 2019 from advertisements on Youtube because he only wanted to try to find a girlfriend, because at that time, Axel was alone and rarely hung out with his friends, so he felt bored; this was the beginning of Axel downloading Tinder.

Unlike Doni, who was influenced by his friendship environment, Axel came from a broken home family. Axel's parents separated when he was six years old, affecting the relationship with his parents because it can be said that it is not harmonious with both mother and father because they rarely communicate even though they live at home. After all, his parents always disputed child custody when he was a child, so he did not have a fixed place to live, sometimes living with his grandmother or aunt. This is one of the reasons why he is close to his family. Axel also has an older brother, but the communication between the two could be better.

In 2020 Axel's father passed away, and Axel's brother's mother moved to Surabaya City. During his four years of college, Axel lived alone without siblings or family. Axel's mother was the backbone to pay for Axel's tuition and life and to ease his mother's burden, Axel worked with his brother as a shopkeeper and received severance pay while studying for three years. Axel's friendships and environment were very private, as he admitted that he was always alone and had no friends or lovers.

Living alone and not having friends to talk to sometimes makes him feel stressed and prone to negative thinking. By living alone, Axel feels he is used to being alone; even at gatherings with extended family like Imlek, he chooses to be alone. This shows his distant relationship with his family. Therefore, playing Tinder and getting victims as an escape fills Axel's loneliness.

With the ease of applications today, especially online dating, Tinder is a suitable place to fill the loneliness. Individuals who feel alone and perhaps more isolated spend more time online. This results in "internet addiction," as stated by Goodman (Thurlow et al., 2004), making the victim have no care for the family, antisocial, and depressed. Based on the story told by Axel, he admitted that living alone and lonely made him depressed and stressed, so to avoid this, he played Tinder. Axel's goal was to play Tinder because he was bored and then wanted to find friends and partners but instead turned to One Night Stand (ONS) by

becoming a catfishing offender.

Based on interviews with two informants in this study, namely Axel and Doni, it starts from the environment and family, which causes their motives to become catfishing actors, such as loneliness, feeling bored, wanting to be recognized, and a sense of pride to be achieved. There are no economic factors behind them becoming catfishing actors; this happens because of their desires and to fulfill personal satisfaction. By becoming a catfishing actor and using an identity that is different from real life, it becomes a place for them to fulfill their needs that are not obtained offline, as stated by Mc Kenna, Green, and Gleason (Attrill, 2015) that it is likely that individuals use the internet to achieve social satisfaction if social interaction in real life does not exist.

### **A reflection of modernity and the fulfillment of sexual desires online**

As time goes by, internet technology brings so many influences in people's lives; not only the way of communicating has changed, or the search for information more facilitated, but the result of the development of the internet itself has an impact on the sexual lives of internet users. The internet has an impact on individual sexual life where it has been replaced by cyberspace which results in individuals being able to have sex without touching because, before the internet, sex was only limited to intimate relationships carried out in real life (Prabowo, 2021). Anthony Giddens, in *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love, and Eroticism in Modern Societies* (1992), explains that there are changes in intimate relations in society from time to time due to the pace of modernity. In ancient times, people recognized the concept of arranged marriage and marriage as a way to fulfill sexual desires. But now, this has begun to shift with the emergence of other ways, such as online dating applications, dating agency columns in the mass media, the internet, and games. There is no need to meet directly through this media intermediary, but it can be achieved only through the media (Manasikana and Noviani, 2021).

This is what researchers found indirectly in the two informants; based on the data obtained through interviews, the purpose of these two informants was Video Call Sex (VCS) and finding friends for One Night Stand (ONS) through online dating Tinder. Researchers see a change in the meaning and meaning of a real partner. Where in the past, individuals generally looked for partners to get married or have a serious relationship, but what researchers found based on these two informants was a partner to satisfy sexual desires online.

"From the beginning, I didn't play Tinder to find a serious partner, and now 95% of those who play Tinder must be going in that direction, so I don't believe that there are people who are looking for a partner or get a serious partner on Tinder if they are already VCS, then I immediately

block WA." (Doni, October 25, 2022).

"In a week, there are seven days, so two or three days; the communication is a video call, call like usual and chat too. More compliments, like you're beautiful, you don't wear makeup, then video calls are as smart as giving compliments, sometimes also flirting, inviting to meet up after that, then go to the hotel for that, after that, it's gone. It's like nothing happened." (Axel, October 26, 2022).

Both of these quotes were conveyed by informants, namely Axel and Doni himself. As previously explained, Doni's goal is to do VCS (video call sex) up to the mastubarsi stage, while Axel is for ONS (one night stand) with his victims. From each victim who had contact with these two informants, the form of relationship that was established did not reach a serious stage. Based on the victim's confession, when they have obtained their respective goals and desires, they immediately block or move away from the victim, one of which is by blocking the Whatsapp number without saying goodbye. When viewed based on social penetration theory, the relationship between the catfishing perpetrator and the victim only reaches the orientation stage (West, R., & Tuner, 2010). At this stage, what wants to be shared is only the process of introducing information or the process of selecting potential victims (such as looking at the Tinder profile of potential victims) and the stage of affective exploratory exchanges (such as exchanging news as Axel and Doni did) to be able to gain the trust of the victim so that they can achieve their goals.

There is no more serious stage in finding a partner because they were not looking for a life partner from the beginning and did not want to have a longer relationship.

"I don't believe that people are looking for a serious partner on Tinder, only 5%, the rest must be for weird purposes if they are on dating apps, many dating apps are now used as things to find FWB, ONS." (Doni, October 25, 2022).

Along with the intensity of internet use and technological advances, the trend of finding a date or partner has also changed. Where these online dating applications can be accessed and downloaded for free. With the emergence of the Tinder app came the "swipe right era." When someone wants to find a partner who fits the criteria, they can easily swipe right to like while left to reject (swipe left) (Manasikana and Noviani, 2021). This is done by the informant, Doni, whom every morning has a habit of always "swiping right" to "match" with women on Tinder without looking at their profiles and waiting if there are women who also accept to "match" with Doni in this way he has gotten dozens of victims while Axel is the same, with the convenience offered by Tinder, Axel can easily find

women who match his criteria so that he can be invited to ONS.

In this era of modernity, it cannot be denied that the availability of access and platforms and many features on applications, including Tinder itself, make it easier for users to find partners according to the desired criteria and types, as a result of the ease of the online world compared to offline in finding partners according to the desired criteria raises a variety of diversity that is more complex in the context of intimate partners or relationships. In the past, to do sexual things, you had to go through the marriage process, while nowadays, although not entirely, sexual things do not have to go through marriage (Manasikana and Noviani, 2021). For example, having sexual intercourse with a new person (one night stand) by informant Axel has become commonplace, and he considers marriage no longer sacred.

On the other hand, technology also opens up opportunities to fulfill sexual desires online, such as porn videos and cybersex. According to Deuel (1996) in (Thurlow et al., 2004), cybersex is a virtual act or set of communication protocols that occur in real-time between two or more people who make direct sexual stimulation the focus of the interaction. There are two categories of cybersex. First is online porn, such as pornographic images and erotic stories. Second is real-time interaction, where the topic of conversation through chatting is sex, webcam sex, or having sex through cyberspace.

Cybersex is a condition that uses the internet to carry out sexual activities by an individual in the form of sexual transactions, having sex via the internet, or recording sexual activities; through this cybersex, emotional and sexual reactions can be obtained because cybersex is something that is done in real-time, the difference with doing direct relationships is that there is an intermediary, namely the internet itself. Facilities such as chatting equipped with webcams and video calls can make the perpetrators interact with each other and enjoy what is being done. Also, the displayed identity game plays a role because it allows the perpetrator to use the desired identity even though it is different from his real self (Prabowo 2021, p. 87–88). This cybersex phenomenon and the existence of products from the development of internet technology increasingly encourage the interest of actors to carry out cybersex activities as a fulfillment of their biological needs.

"I like it best when the girl wears a necklace because getting there is easier. Usually, I compliment her on her nice necklace, and the girl shows it. From there, I will lure her until. Finally, she wants to open everything and masturbate." (Doni, October 25, 2022).

This was said by Doni, one of the study's informants. He admitted that by becoming a Catfishing perpetrator, he could freely get what he wanted, namely



VCS (video call sex) with the victim and until the victim masturbated without any coercion to do this because from the beginning, Doni had said that his goal was not to find a real partner but to do things that were 18+, what Doni did include cybersex in the real-time interaction category.

"I like it best when the girl wears a necklace because getting there is easier. Usually, I compliment her on her nice necklace, and the girl shows it. I will lure her from there until she finally wants to open everything and masturbate." (Doni, October 25, 2022).

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"I guard social media like IG, don't let them know; I even fake my WA name so they don't know who I am because it's bad if they find out." (Axel, October 26, 2022).

"So far, I've never been caught, I only know my WA number, and I also fake my name, and they rarely know my social media because I also deliberately target those aged 25 and above so they are more literate, so it's not easy to find my social media" (Doni, October 25, 2022).

Based on the experiences and meanings of Doni and Axel. Researchers see that CMC and cybersex open up opportunities for anonymity that can easily be done and formed, making the perpetrators addicted to using the internet as a facility or tool to satisfy sexual desires. With anonymity, the perpetrator does not need to fear being recognized by relatives or society. A virtual identity can be obscured to guarantee the confidentiality of the identity of the perpetrators so that they can carry out cybersex activities without fear or worry that it will be known by others, which can later damage the self-esteem and credibility of the perpetrators. As Axel and Doni admitted, this drives them to become catfishing actors because their goal is not to find a marriage partner but to satisfy their desires.

As the researcher explained at the beginning, there has been a shift in sexuality, where fulfilling sexual needs does not have to be in marriage. The meaning of a partner has also varied, although what needs to be underlined is that not everyone has the same thoughts, so the researcher sees a shift rather than a change. This is not far from the impact of communication technology and modernity that makes it easier for individuals to get what they want only through the online world, one of which is the emergence of the Tinder application itself,

which indirectly opens up opportunities and provides facilities to fulfill sexual desires with the emergence of cybersex, The search for friends to do ONS proves that something like this exists.

In addition, the anonymity of the internet makes the perpetrators addicted and comfortable when doing this because they are not afraid that their true identity can be revealed and can obscure their true identity because it is done online. This relationship is closely related to the two informants of this study, Doni and Axel, who became Catfishing perpetrators by hiding their true identities to find friends/partners to satisfy their sexual desires, because the behavior they did is still considered to violate norms and taboos, which makes them afraid that relatives know their real actions, so their background in becoming Catfishing perpetrators through online dating Tinder is clear.

The relationship with this research wants to show that the two informants have different views on the concept of sexuality, seen from their goal in finding a partner is to satisfy sexual desires that are not through the marriage process and escape to fill the loneliness. To achieve this, the behavior is to become a Catfishing offender who deceives and hides their true identity to get victims. The actions taken are closely related to modernity, which is seen from the development of social media, one of which is online dating Tinder, which is a tool that facilitates catfishing offenders freely to be able to communicate and get victims with fake identities and conduct VCS and ONS or what is known as Cybersex. Cybersex can occur due to the development of the internet, where the perpetrator can have sex without having to meet.

## CONCLUSIONS

This phenomenological research shows that the perpetrators of catfishing in online dating applications (Tinder) interpret their actions not only as fulfilling sexual desires, either through cyber sex, one-night stand practices, or friends with benefits. The research findings also show that the perpetrators interpret the practice of catfishing as the fulfillment of various desires that cannot be obtained in the real world, namely the desire to be recognized, praised, and a sense of pride, all of which fail to be obtained in the real world.

The emergence of this meaning cannot be separated from the character of online dating applications that do allow for identity falsification. The fake identity makes it easier for the perpetrators to find victims through a good form of self-presentation, including by posting a fake profile picture. At this point, the perpetrators create an identity different from the original, or what in this research can be called having a two-face personality. With this two face personality, the perpetrators seek out and trick their victims into following what they want. This finding confirms the weaknesses of computer-mediated communication (CMC),

which is anonymous, editable, and asynchronous, which opens up space for catfishing perpetrators to create fake identities.

Academically, this research contributes to studies related to mediated communication and sensitive topics that still need to be researched. Practically, this research can be used as literacy for social media users to avoid internet-based identity fraud.

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