

Analysis of Interpersonal Communication Patterns of Love Scams Mode on Social Media in Female Students in Medan City

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Abstract

One of the modes that take the most victims, especially women, is love scams. This mode is to find a mate in cyberspace. People who do not have a soul mate or who are lonely try to find a partner through the Internet. This study aimed to determine the pattern of interpersonal communication mode love scams on social media in UIN North Sumatra students. This research covers various issues, such as the problem formulation, namely, how the mode of love scams on social media among female students can occur. To answer these problems thoroughly and deeply. The research method used is a qualitative content analysis using Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) Models consisting of impersonal, interpersonal, and hyperpersonal. The study concluded that all three patterns are established in love scam cases. Analysis of this study will be conducted through interviews with several sources and observations, which will then be verified so that the research is relevant. The results of this study show that interpersonal communication via social media often can create self-disclosure (self-disclosure), which creates high trust between one parties, which can lead to love scammers. Research contributions based on technological developments that continue to grow and become more sophisticated will also bring more significant dangers, one of which is cybercrime; however, the number of cases of cybercrime victims is very high, and only a few people dare to report it. The case is due to our country's lack of a supervisory system and law. Therefore, users are required to be good at maintaining personal privacy to avoid crime on social media.

Keywords: *Interpersonal Communication Patterns; Social Media; Cybercrime; Love Scams.*

Abstrak

Salah satu modus yang paling banyak memakan korban khususnya perempuan adalah love scams. Modus ini adalah mencari jodoh di dunia maya. Orang-orang yang belum memiliki jodoh atau yang kesepian mencoba mencari pasangan lewat internet. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui pola komunikasi interpersonal modus love scams di media sosial pada mahasiswi UIN Sumatera Utara. Penelitian ini mencakup berbagai persoalan seperti Rumusan masalah yaitu, bagaimana modus love scams pada media sosial di kalangan mahasiswi dapat terjadi. Untuk menjawab persoalan tersebut secara menyeluruh dan mendalam. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah analisis isi kualitatif dengan menggunakan Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) Models yang terdiri dari impersonal, interpersonal dan hyperpersonal. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan ketiga pola ini terbangun dalam kasus love scam. Analisis pada penelitian ini akan dilakukan wawancara dengan beberapa sumber dan observasi yang kemudian akan menjadi verifikasi agar penelirian bersifat relevan. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa sering kali komunikasi interpersonal yang dilakukan via media sosial dapat membuat adanya self disclosure (keterbukaan diri) yang menciptakan kepercayaan yang tinggi diantara salah satu pihak yang dapat menimbulkan terjadinya love scammer (penipuan cinta). Kontribusi penelitian berdasarkan perkembangan teknologi yang terus bertumbuh dan semakin canggih juga akan membawa bahaya yang semakin besar salah satunya adalah cyber crime, walaupun jumlah kasus korban cybercrime sangat tinggi namun hanya beberapa orang yang berani melaporkan. Hal ini karena kurangnya system pengawasan dan hukum di negara kita, oleh karena itu para pengguna dituntut untuk pandai menjaga privacy diri agar terhindar dari kejahatan di media sosial.

Kata Kunci : *Pola Komunikasi Interpersonal; Media Sosial; Cybercrime; Love Scams.*

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INTRODUCTION

Humans are social beings who acquire behavior through the process of learning and are generally influenced by various social and cultural processes that are intertwined because of the existence of communication which is the most fundamental aspect that is useful for learning and responding to the stimuli of the environment, and communication activities also interpret our behavior, environment and social (Perbawaningsih & Sulistyningtyas, 2023).

In ancient times people could communicate with various obstacles, for example, because of distance or inadequate communication tools. Nevertheless, along with the rapid development of information technology, which is central in society, humans can do many things and be guided to follow the developments that have occurred. And this also shifts the pattern of piker, the pattern of life in society, and begins to trigger changes in economic, cultural, social, defense, and data security to law enforcement (Juditha, 2015).

Our social source shows that Indonesia's active social media users were 167 million in January 2023. Furthermore, this number is equivalent to 60.4% of the population of the Indonesian region.(Lestari et al., 2023) The time spent playing on social media reaches 3 hours and 18 minutes daily, making the duration the tenth highest worldwide.

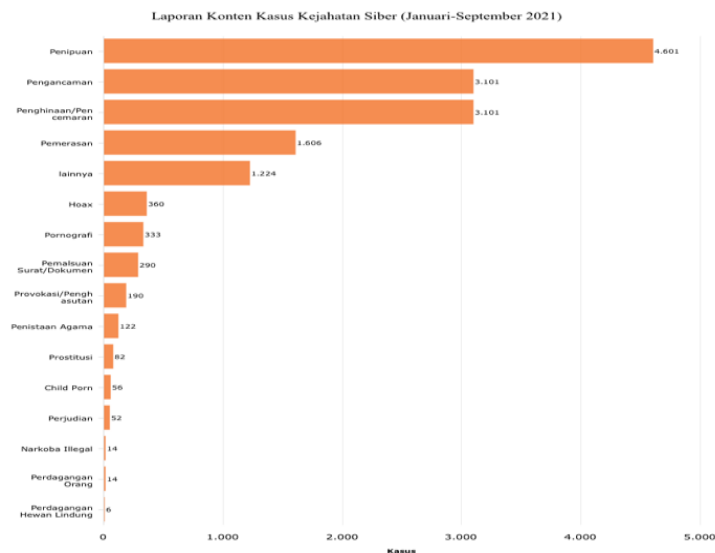
By looking at this data, there is a high possibility that love scams or other scams can occur.



Picture 1 : Number of Active Social Media Users in Indonesia (2015 – 2022)

Source: <https://dataindonesia.id/>

In fraudulent use of social media, it is not uncommon for users to use fake identities obtained illegally and available very quickly without being detected. Not infrequently, the perpetrators of love scammers commit identity theft by posting photos that aim to be interesting, and usually, the photos are taken from modeling websites or other applications. In 2021, there were reported to be around 15,152 reports related to cybercrime reported from January to September 2021, with losses reaching 3.88 trillion.



Picture 2 : Cybercrime Case Content Report (January – September 2021)

Source: <https://databoks.katadata.co.id>

Based on (Dihni, 2021), fraudulent content is the most reported thing in crimes on social media, with 4,601 cases and followed by threats and insults at 3,101 cases. In this case, it was also conveyed that most social media crimes occurred on the Whatsapp messaging application, as many as 8,357 cases. After that, there were 2,621 cases of the Instagram application. In the case of love scammers, the perpetrator starts this crime by designing a profile in such a way with quality photos and then trying to contact the victim in various ways that are not suspicious for the victim, then building a solid bond with the victim that lasts between 1 to 2 months or more. The perpetrator will try to ask the victim for money by creating an atmosphere that makes the victim pity/pity, like telling tragic events that He experienced, like being sick and requiring unexpected hospital costs or other sad stories that had never been thought of (Voges et al., 2022).

If the mode is successful, the perpetrator will be more diligent in contacting and building better relationships with his victims; then, the perpetrator will more often do various modes to get money/goods. In love scam mode, this incident will continue until the victim loses patience and asks questions; when the victim is at this stage then, the victim of love scam mode will begin to realize that the perpetrator is using them and will begin to stop sending money/goods (Zikra & Tantimin, 2022). Generally, love scam victims do not realize that they are being deceived because, given the amount of time and effort that fraudsters put into building a relationship, from this relationship, the victims create trust in the perpetrator. The perpetrator expects this to launch his fraud. (Catherine et al., 2022)

This love scammer's perpetrators are skilled in seducing victims through chat, Facebook inbox messages, comments, or emails. In the case of a love scam, many modes are carried out repeatedly from one victim to another. For example, actors usually chat about their successful work but find it challenging to find an honest and understanding partner. After it is felt that this mode can attract victims, the perpetrators of love scams will try to extract as much information as possible naturally from their victims, such as knowing the victim's finances and how stable the victim's emotions are. In Indonesia, the most frequent mode of fraud is to send something; it can be in the form of (he said) large amounts of money or very valuable (expensive) goods before they do after getting the victim's phone number and address. (Safitri et al., 2022)

A form of social media that is full of freedom has a high chance of being misused by irresponsible people. Information that can be accessed quickly in the user's profile or a snapshot of activities uploaded by the user can be information from the user's socioeconomic status. Moreover, this freedom of access to information also allows everyone to visit more than 1 other person's social networking site; this freedom can also create additional information about whom the user is friends with and his activities with his friends. This is undoubtedly an open opportunity for the emergence of crime on social media/cybercrime. Criminals on social media have high access to get a complete picture of potential victims through their profile photos and posts (Sagita & Irwansyah, 2021).

Social media users must be careful in playing social media, accepting friendships from unknown people, and revealing daily activities, because this can call criminals on social media, especially love scammers. Love scammer was first discovered in 2011 in Indonesia, and its victims continue to grow until now. However, there is no exact report on how many love scammer cases occur each year because many victims feel embarrassed to tell/report this incident. This is in line with King & Thomas' statement (Freyth & Batinic, 2021) that legal institutions receive very few complaints, either because the victim is ashamed after being deceived or the victim does not realize that they have been deceived.

The rise of social media crime during the rapid development of social media sometimes ends up very troubling for the community. Because various kinds of crimes can arise with the wrong use of social media, examples include defamation, gambling, terrorism, credit card fraud, pornography, and other crimes. Social media and communication that were intended initially for positive things in the community also have a negative effect, namely with some misuse of the function of technology and communication that causes various crimes that occur among the community through social media / online, which we can also call cybercrime, which is an illegal act in a dirty way and has social media intermediaries who are done to access anything that can bring profits through the internet, whether it is data theft, identity forgery to fraud in the mode of acquaintances/girlfriends. Hayes (F. et al., 2021) classify four sections of cybercrime against individuals: Identity Theft, Sexual Predation, Fraud/Tricks, and Financial Predation. This is called cybercrime, a criminal activity that starts from technology/the internet.

Scams like this are categorized into scams/scammers, which are usually carried out by someone or a group who cheat cunningly, and fraud takes place in cyberspace by falsifying some data so that victims can better trust the perpetrators. This type of love scammer scam covers many fields, one of which is by luring affection, and most victims of love scammers are pranksters, Lonely, and shy. The target is single, that is, people who are old enough but have yet to be married (C. et al., 2022). The victims initially just wanted to idly find friends/partners via the internet without revealing the risks that existed. This unilateral trusting relationship is built because of the intense personal communication carried out daily on social media, people who are physically distant and do not even know each other's real identity will feel closer through the internet, but this is different from the closest person physically because each knows each other's shortcomings and information transparently and results in a decrease in interaction between individuals who trigger a lack of familiarity and sensitivity towards each other (Cessia, K. D. & Lestari, 2017).

Communication patterns in love scams on social media included in the cybercrime classification are considered more trusted by victims compared to people known to be close and communicate directly without intermediaries or communication tools. In essence, love scams that occur on social media are a series of forms of deception that take advantage of the emotions

of the victim, and the interaction that the perpetrator makes is only part of the mode to make the victim believe that the relationship they are in is a real relationship (Irawan, 2018).

The criminal case in Indonesia due to the misuse of social media applications as a matchmaker that attracted the most public attention was the case of Erayani, where he was a person who was born a woman biologically but claimed to be a man and lied about his identity about work as a doctor and graduated from several well-known universities. Erayani, who has the pseudonym Ahnaf Arrafif, managed to marry a girl from Jambi to commit fraud worth 300 million Rupiah, and its various modes started from the misuse of social media. In this case, there are many exciting things to research, and how the perpetrator mode and how the victim responds, then what are the objectives of the crime (Yanto, 2020)

Communication tends to take place more and is perceived verbally, while nonverbal cues believed to represent the honesty of communication are increasingly abandoned. Even later, strangers who are only known through the internet (social networks, email, and others) are so quickly trusted that unknowingly many users are deceived by perpetrators of cybercrime. The communication patterns launched by cybercrime perpetrators are more trusted by their victims than by close known people who communicate directly.

(Diana Saiful Bahry & Noraini Tobi, 2015) also conducted a study entitled "Cybercrime over Internet Love Scams in Malaysia: A Discussion on the Theoretical Perspectives, Connecting Factors and Keys to the Problem." The results of this study concluded that judging from four theories, Kantianism, laws and regulations, Utilitarianism, and the agreed social contract of love, scammers are not only unlawful but also moral. It is crucial to have a partnership framework. The collaboration connects the embassy office with the police and immigration department to combat misused student visas. Biometric solutions and other anti-fraud companies enact stricter systems to secure financial processes than to make it easier for customers while neglecting the security aspect. Even more important is for individuals to be equipped with the knowledge to never share their personal information with anyone by practicing some precautionary measures before being scammed. Moreover, the Malaysian government will consider following the governments of Burma, Cuba, China, and North Korea, which have limited their internet access by having control over them.

Today's research focuses more on communication, namely how communication patterns are built in cyberspace. This research distinguishes between research that has been done before, namely on the legal and criminal sides only. At the same time, this study specializes in the communication patterns of love scam cases or love relationship scams through cyberspace which is studied in more depth. This research is essential because one of the reasons has never been done before.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Communication Patterns

A communication pattern is a simple description of the communication process that shows the relationship between one communication component and other components (Prasanti, 2016). Communication patterns are also a communication process because the existence of communication patterns makes a series of activities to convey messages so that feedback is obtained from the recipient of the message; from the process will arise patterns, shape models, and also small parts that are closely related to the communication process (Khairuni & Khairuni, 2016).

According to Devito, there are four parts to the communication pattern, namely:

1. Interpersonal communication
2. Group Communication
3. Mass Communication
4. Public Communication

Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication is exchanging information, ideas, opinions, and feelings between two or more people. Interpersonal communication refers to the process of closeness from the occurrence of communication that has a direct effect. Therefore, interpersonal communication begins with a psychological approach by building closeness and familiarity. (Manurung & Sumanti, 2022). According to Irwin Altman and Dalmas Taylor (Nurdin, 2021), some factors encourage interpersonal communication, namely Social penetration and Open attitude (Self Disclosure)

According to Irwin Altman and Dalmas Taylor, social penetration is a picture of the bonding process of human relationships in which individuals move from superficial communication to closer communication. Altman and Taylor liken humans to onions. The point is that, in essence, humans have several layers or layers of personality. If we peel off the outer skin of the onion, then we will find another layer of skin. Social penetration theory also explains that the development of a relationship has attachments; if a relationship becomes damaged, then closeness will often decrease. In the application of social penetration, there is a term known as the "onion theory," which describes that humans have personality layers at some level of closeness to other individuals (Karina & Eko Budiwaspada, 2020). The outermost layer is an orientation stage that becomes the gate to exchange information between individuals at the beginning of the time; at this stage, individuals begin to open up but are still general and easily accessible to everyone.

Then the second layer can only be entered by people who are close enough and often communicate with the individual, such as friends and only a few outsiders, and are semi-private. Then the last is the deepest layer, which has self-value, self-concept, and some unresolved problems. This region is very distinctive and invisible from the outside and is the center of emotions, and is very difficult to reach.

Self-disclosure is central to the interpersonal communication process, which is a way for other individuals to learn more about what happens to other individuals; self-disclosure is also helpful for increasing self-comfort, reducing anxiety, and intensifying interpersonal interest. In relationships of social penetration and self-disclosure, intimacy can be brought about through a long process and carried out continuously because the process of interpersonal relationships is easy to collapse before passing through various meaningful and stable stages in order to give rise to solid relationships and more incredible emotions that are useful in increasing trust and commitment. The process of a love scammer having a relationship with a potential victim is quite tricky because it must be done intensely. Suppose the love scammer feels the victim is brutal in convincing them to undergo a relationship. In that case, the perpetrators of this love scammer will slowly stay away and end the relationship. However, on the other hand, social penetration and self-openness can be a threat if we choose the wrong one to whom we open up, especially if on social media.

Love scam

A *love scam* is a romance scam that occurs when criminals adopt online identities in various ways, are considered experts, and seem sincere and considerate to get love and trust from their victims and then commit fraud, manipulation, or stealing from victims. This term developed because of the acceleration of the establishment of matchmaking sites via the internet, which is very fast. Nevertheless, more and more love scammers infiltrate friendship sites and social media sites, which perpetrators consider to be easy targets and provide free access to obtain enough information and images about their victims (Wijayanti & Hafidz, 2021).

RESEARCH METHODS

Williams (Tasya, 2021) states that qualitative research is classified into several groups. Data collection is carried out within reasonable limits. Qualitative research is interested in phenomena that occur in social and cultural in an atmosphere that takes place transparently, not in controlled conditions. Researchers are the main instrument in collecting and interpreting data. The tools used, such as tests, films, tape recordings, and others, are only tools (if needed), not a substitute for the researcher himself.

The research method used in this analysis is a descriptive qualitative method. Furthermore, this study will be paradigm constructivist based on a group of researchers who will look for the meaning of the writings built by the perpetrators to the victims of love scams on social media, especially in the scope of female students with qualitative research methods with an in-depth interview approach with several informants obtained randomly. The informants selected are those who have been caught in love scams. Furthermore, this research is descriptive and only focuses on victims by using in-depth interview techniques on many love scam victims in the scope of female students of the 2019 Stambuk Communication Science study program at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Of the victims of love scams on social media, many are not aware that they have been deceived, whether it is cheated financially or by identity; in an interview conducted by researchers with one of the victims, it is known that trust has been built in enough time to help each other financially.

Victim (Female Student, Facebook Application User, Age 22 years)

Interpersonal communication is considered most effective in changing a person's attitude, opinion, or behavior due to its dialogical nature. The feedback is immediate; the communicator knows the communicant's response immediately. When communication occurs, the communicator knows whether the communication is positive or negative, successful or not, and can allow the communicant to ask as many questions as possible.

"He used to chat with me from Facebook, then because it was fun so it continued. We also often call cakes, I know his friends are also capable of his friends and then he also helps encourage me to go to college, usually we chat for up to 3 hours."

"He asked me what I was doing, then I told him what I was doing in college, and I asked him again what he was busy with. Apparently, there he claimed that he was a tentara (soldier) in Papua, the cake part was not watching me; he said I didn't understand what it was."

*"And I started to get cheated when he asked to send credit because he said it was difficult to network there, I also believed it because he asked to be sent 500k in the form of credit, before I sent him and transferred money to me 700k. I think it's good *laughing*. But when I sent the 500k, the next day he asked to send more. So I think this guy is good. But after that he asked me to send another two million rupiah and promised to be reimbursed as soon as possible. However, after that all of my social media access and my phone number were blocked by him"...*

In this interview, researchers see that self-openness occurs due to closer interpersonal relationships and continuous communication. It can be revealed that initially, the victim was just a whim and had positive thoughts while on social media. The perpetrator tricked his victim by committing scams, which seemed to give bonus money for helping him in doing something he could not do himself; because of the incident, "Asking for help" is considered natural by the victim; that is where the perpetrators begin to carry out their actions. Moreover, in the case of love scams, it is not uncommon for perpetrators to use fake identities that are expected to make it easier for perpetrators to trick their victims.

Victim (Female student, Instagram app user, Age 21 years)

What happened in the love scam case with so many Indonesian women becoming Victims, inseparable from their well-established and positive communication patterns with scammers? If there is no feedback from the message's recipient, this fraud could never happen.

"We know him from Instagram; he told me when I stalked his Instagram account I saw following. Apparently many of our friends are the same, so as long as we tell the same story, we feel that we have the same background, and we continue to date, then often call and meet several times too, quite a long time I dated for about 5-6 months. Well, from the beginning, I didn't feel cheated; even his son was good at eating food. Teros apparently told me that if he had a problem with it, our family also rarely called because he said his cellphone often made errors; he told me that he was also saving money to buy a cellphone. Until finally, he asked permission to ask for my cellphone because he knew that my cellphone had 2; then I gave him my iPhone Xs. So often again we talk, yes, about 2 weeks is still intense our conversation. Suddenly after that, we never spoke again, so I also took the initiative to ask my friend who knew him from ig earlier. My friend told me that he was selling the same cellphone that I gave him. Anyway, the story was a bit complicated until I was staged to make myself deceived; I just thought about it again, uh, and apparently, I was deceived.

In this interview session, many things are taken for granted but end up surprising because it can be seen that the relationship is very close and strong, and this is also what encourages the victim to no longer be vigilant because he has thought that their relationship is very close. His girlfriend cannot commit fraud.

The reach of social media is extensive because its function is made to be able to introduce each other at known and unknown distances. The existence of social media can also make it easier for humans to interact. Even people who are physically far away will feel close by only communicating through social media; even now, people are more confident communicating through social media than face-to-face meetings. Of course, this can make it easier for teenagers to meet the needs of their routine. Of the many benefits of social media felt by its users,

especially teenagers, social media can become a boomerang if it is not wise in its use because social media is different from the real world, so irresponsible individuals can use it.

Communication Patterns in Love Scams Mode on Female Students

Communication Patterns in Love Scams Mode on Female Students Because of the establishment of very close interpersonal communication, the perpetrators carry out their actions in the same way, namely continuing to communicate and pay great attention and placing themselves as if the perpetrator is the person who best understands the life of his victim and not infrequently the perpetrators make fake identities to look more attractive and cool. Finally, they feel the relationship is very close and open to each other. In that case, the perpetrators will launch their actions by selling sad stories that will make victims sympathize with the napa that befell the perpetrator. It is from these conditions that the perpetrators can benefit. Victims of love scammers are mostly unaware that they have entered a trap, so they need the help of others or need a long time to wake up; this happens because the words of the perpetrators have already lulled the victim.

CONCLUSION

Analysis of Communication Patterns in Love Scams Mode on Social Media is the development of communication that quickly triggers the emergence of crime with a new mode. Love scammers are an excellent opportunity for criminals on social media who only have introductions and intense conversations with their victims. Close relationships are established through interpersonal relationships with potential victims that run with trust, closeness, and openness. During a love scammer, the perpetrator commits fraud in various ways to make money or goods from the victims; in the case of a love scam, the exchange of money and goods is calculated by the exchange of love mode and a series of affection that has been given. Indonesia's number of active social media users was 167 million in January 2023, with 60.4% of the population and 3 hours 18 minutes every day, making the duration the tenth highest in the world.

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