

## DIGITAL SPACE AND HIDDEN SOCIAL PRACTICES: A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE USE OF MICHAT AS A MEDIUM FOR ONE-NIGHT STAND PARTNER SEARCHING

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### Abstract

*This study explores the use of the MiChat application as a platform for establishing temporary relationships, particularly in the context of searching for one-night stand partners. Using a qualitative approach, this research collects data through in-depth interviews and participatory observation of active MiChat users. The findings reveal that this application functions as a digital space that allows individuals to express emotional and sexual needs without being bound by conventional social norms. MiChat users often create personal justifications for this practice, even though it is considered contrary to prevailing moral values. This study highlights how modern communication technology is transforming social interaction patterns, creating new dynamics that blur the boundaries between public and private spaces. The results of this study contribute significantly to understanding the impact of digital media on social behavior and identity construction in contemporary society.*

**Keywords:** *MiChat, Temporary Relationships, Digital Space, Social Norms, Social Interaction*

### INTRODUCTION

The development of communication technology has brought fundamental changes in how humans interact and build social relationships (Damayanti et al., 2022). One phenomenon that has attracted attention is the use of messaging applications like MiChat, which not only function as everyday communication tools but also as media for building temporary relationships, including searching for one-night stand partners (Huda et al., 2020). This phenomenon raises sociological questions about how digital spaces influence norms, morality, and social practices in society. The reason for choosing the title "Digital Space and Hidden Social Practices: A Sociological

Analysis of the Use of MiChat as a Medium for One-Night Stand Partner Searching" is to explore the social dynamics behind the use of MiChat in a specific context, namely the search for temporary relationships, and its implications for social structures and moral values.

This research is based on several relevant sociological theories to understand this phenomenon. These theories not only provide a conceptual framework for analyzing the issue but also help explain why such practices emerge and how digital technology influences social interactions. One of these is Zygmunt Bauman's Theory of Liquid Modernity in his book Liquid

Modernity (Nova, 2023), which explains that contemporary society is characterized by a "liquid" nature, where social relationships, norms, and institutions are no longer rigid and permanent but flexible, temporary, and easily changeable (Kurniawan, 2020). This concept is highly relevant for understanding the phenomenon of searching for one-night stand partners through MiChat.

In this context, MiChat becomes a manifestation of liquid modernity, where social relationships are built quickly, are temporary, and easily terminated. Users of this application tend to avoid long-term commitments, reflecting the tendency of modern society to prefer freedom and flexibility. Bauman also emphasizes that in liquid societies, individuals tend to seek instant gratification, including in intimate relationships, without being bound by traditional norms.

Next, Manuel Castells' Theory of the Network Society in his book *The Rise of the Network Society* explains that information technology has created new social structures based on networks (Suryanatha, 2023). In the network society, social interactions are no longer limited by space and time but occur in globally connected digital spaces.

MiChat can be seen as part of the network society, where individuals are connected through digital platforms to build social relationships, including temporary relationships such as searching for one-night stand partners. Castells emphasizes that in the network society, social relationships are often transactional and unsustainable, reflecting changes in social interaction patterns in the digital era.

Additionally, the social facts of MiChat usage can also be analyzed using Erving Goffman's Dramaturgy Theory. Erving Goffman (1959), in his book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, introduces the concept of dramaturgy, where social life is understood as a theatrical performance (Fitri, 2021). Individuals play certain roles on the "front stage" and adjust their behavior according to the audience they face.

In the context of MiChat, users can be seen as "actors" who create digital identities to achieve specific goals, such as searching for one-night stand partners. The digital space becomes a "stage" where individuals can freely express themselves without worrying about the social stigma that might arise in real life. Goffman also explains that individuals often use "masks" to hide their true identities, which can be seen in MiChat usage practices, where users often conceal their real identities.

Furthermore, Sherry Turkle's Theory of Digital Space and Identity can also support the discussion of this phenomenon. Sherry Turkle, in her book *Alone Together*, explains that digital spaces allow individuals to explore their identities freely, without being bound by the social norms that apply in real life (Anselmus, 2024). MiChat is an example of how digital spaces facilitate the expression of identities that differ from real life.

Turkle also emphasizes that while technology enables individuals to connect instantly, the relationships formed are often shallow and unsustainable (Widjanarko, 2023). This is evident in the phenomenon of searching for one-night stand partners

through MiChat, where relationships are built quickly and easily terminated.

The use of MiChat as a medium for searching for one-night stand partners is a complex social phenomenon, influenced by the development of digital technology and changing values in society. Through theoretical perspectives such as Liquid Modernity Theory (Bauman), Network Society Theory (Castells), Dramaturgy Theory (Goffman), and Digital Space and Identity Theory (Turkle), this research reveals that MiChat is not only a communication tool but also a digital space that facilitates hidden social practices. This application allows individuals to build temporary relationships, avoid long-term commitments, and express identities that differ from real life. This phenomenon reflects the transformation of social interactions in the digital era, where norms and morality are continually negotiated, and the boundaries between public and private spaces are increasingly blurred. Thus, this research provides a deep understanding of the impact of technology on social behavior and contemporary societal structures, while affirming the importance of sociological studies in addressing social challenges in the digital era.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses qualitative research with a descriptive-analytical approach to understand the phenomenon of using MiChat as a medium for searching for one-night stand partners. This approach was chosen because it can explore the meanings, motivations, and experiences of research subjects in depth (Ahmad & Laha, 2020).

Data collection techniques were

conducted through in-depth interviews and participatory observation of 15 informants, consisting of active MiChat users, both male and female, who engage in the practice of searching for one-night stand partners. Informants were selected purposively to ensure diverse experiences.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns, themes, and meanings emerging from the informants' narratives (Ahmad, 2019). Through this method, the research successfully revealed the social dynamics, norms, and morality associated with the use of MiChat, as well as its implications for social interactions in digital spaces.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings and analysis of the research on the use of MiChat as a medium for searching for one-night stand partners. Data obtained through in-depth interviews and participatory observation of 15 informants (both male and female) were analyzed to reveal the social dynamics, norms, and morality associated with this practice. The research results are divided into two main parts: (1) Results, which present empirical findings from the field, and (2) Discussion, which interprets these findings through sociological theoretical perspectives. By combining field data and theory, this chapter aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how MiChat influences social interactions and societal structures in the context of searching for one-night stand partners.

### Result

This research reveals various empirical findings related to the use of MiChat as a medium for searching for one-

night stand partners. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews and participatory observation of 15 informants, consisting of male and female users with diverse backgrounds. The research findings are divided into several main themes, namely motivations for using MiChat, interaction patterns, negotiation of norms and morality, and the role of digital identity. Below is a detailed explanation of the research findings:

### ***Motivations for Using MiChat***

Most informants admitted to using MiChat to search for one-night stand partners for various reasons. The main motivations that frequently emerged were boredom, emotional needs, and the desire to explore relationships without commitment. Some informants stated that their daily lives were monotonous, and MiChat became a means to seek entertainment or new experiences.

Additionally, some informants revealed that they felt lonely or emotionally unfulfilled in real-life relationships. MiChat provided a space for them to seek emotional or sexual satisfaction without being bound by long-term commitments. Some female informants also mentioned that they used MiChat to seek financial support or gifts from temporary partners.

Another factor driving the use of MiChat was the anonymity and freedom offered by the application. Users felt more comfortable expressing themselves openly without worrying about the social stigma that might arise in real life.

### ***Interaction Patterns***

Interaction patterns in MiChat tend to be transactional and pragmatic. Users often directly state their goals without small talk, such as searching for a partner for a brief encounter. This reflects the temporary and unsustainable nature of the relationships.

Some informants explained that they used direct and to-the-point language when interacting on MiChat. For example, they would immediately ask about a potential partner's willingness to meet or negotiate certain conditions before arranging a meeting. This interaction pattern indicates that relationships built through MiChat are more functional and less emotional.

Moreover, some informants mentioned that they frequently switched partners in a short period. This shows that relationships in MiChat are not designed to last long but are only meant to fulfill immediate needs.

### ***Negotiation of Norms and Morality***

Although the practice of searching for one-night stand partners is considered taboo by some in society, informants created personal justifications to legitimize their actions. Some informants viewed this practice as a form of individual freedom in the modern era. They argued that as long as it did not harm others, this practice was not problematic.

Some informants also mentioned that they distinguished between real life and digital life. They felt that what happened on MiChat did not affect their real lives, so it did not violate prevailing social norms. However, some informants admitted to



feeling guilty or worried if their actions were discovered by family or close friends.

This negotiation of norms and morality shows that MiChat users have different perspectives on the practice of searching for one-night stand partners. They created their own value systems that allowed them to engage in this practice without feeling that they were violating social norms.

### ***Role of Digital Identity***

MiChat users often create digital identities that differ from their real lives. They use photos, pseudonyms, and self-descriptions designed to attract potential partners. Some informants admitted to using more attractive photos or editing their photos to look better.

Additionally, some informants mentioned that they created specific personas on MiChat. For example, they pretended to have higher-status jobs or social statuses to attract potential partners. This shows that digital identities on MiChat often do not match users' real identities.

The use of digital identities also allows users to maintain anonymity and avoid risks that might arise if their real identities were known. Some informants stated that they felt safer and more comfortable using digital identities because they did not have to worry about social consequences in real life.

### ***Impact on Real Life***

Although MiChat is used as a digital space separate from real life, some informants admitted that this practice had an impact on their lives. Some informants mentioned that they found it more difficult to build serious relationships because they

were accustomed to temporary relationships on MiChat.

Additionally, some informants admitted to feeling disappointed or frustrated when their expectations were not met during encounters with temporary partners. This shows that while MiChat offers freedom and anonymity, this practice can also have emotional consequences for users.

These research findings reveal that the use of MiChat as a medium for searching for one-night stand partners is influenced by various factors, including emotional needs, boredom, and the desire to explore relationships without commitment. Interaction patterns on MiChat tend to be transactional and pragmatic, while users create digital identities that differ from their real lives. Although this practice is considered taboo by some in society, MiChat users create personal justifications to legitimize their actions. These findings provide a comprehensive picture of the social dynamics behind the use of MiChat in the context of searching for one-night stand partners.

### **Discussion**

Based on the research findings, the use of MiChat as a medium for searching for one-night stand partners reflects complex social dynamics, where digital technology influences interactions, norms, and morality in society. Through the perspective of Liquid Modernity Theory (Bauman), it can be understood that this phenomenon aligns with the concept of liquid society, where social relationships are temporary, flexible, and easily changeable (Nova, 2023).

The research findings show that most MiChat users avoid long-term commitments and prefer temporary relationships that provide instant gratification. This is evident from users' motivations to seek entertainment, emotional needs, or new experiences without attachment.

The freedom and anonymity offered by MiChat allow users to express themselves openly, reflecting the tendency of modern society to prefer freedom over traditional norms.

Furthermore, the Network Society Theory (Castells) explains that MiChat, as part of the network society, facilitates transactional and unsustainable interactions. The research findings show that interaction patterns on MiChat tend to be pragmatic and direct, where users often state their goals without small talk. Relationships built through MiChat are temporary and functional, reflecting the nature of relationships in the network society that prioritize practicality over emotional depth. MiChat users also frequently switch partners in a short period, showing that relationships in digital spaces are easily formed and terminated.

Dramaturgy Theory (Goffman) provides an important perspective on how MiChat users create digital identities to achieve specific goals. The research findings show that MiChat users often use more attractive photos, pseudonyms, and self-descriptions designed to attract potential partners. This reflects how individuals play certain roles in digital spaces, using "masks" to hide their real identities (Fitri, 2021). The digital space becomes a "stage" where users can freely express themselves without worrying about the social stigma that might arise in real life. Additionally, MiChat users

distinguish between real life and digital life, feeling that what happens on MiChat does not affect their real lives. This shows how individuals create a distance between their digital and real identities.

Next, the Theory of Digital Space and Identity (Turkle) emphasizes that digital spaces allow individuals to explore identities freely, but the relationships formed are often shallow and unsustainable. The research findings show that relationships built through MiChat tend to be temporary and transactional, reflecting the shallow and non-emotional nature of these relationships. Although technology enables individuals to connect instantly, the relationships formed often lack emotional depth. Additionally, MiChat users often create digital identities that do not match their real identities, such as using more attractive photos or creating specific personas. This reflects how digital spaces facilitate free identity expression but can also lead to discrepancies between digital and real identities.

By combining the research findings and theoretical perspectives, it can be concluded that the use of MiChat as a medium for searching for one-night stand partners reflects the transformation of social interactions in the digital era. This phenomenon not only shows changes in how humans interact but also blurs the boundaries between public and private spaces and challenges traditional moral values. This research provides an important contribution to understanding the impact of technology on social interactions and societal structures in the digital era.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that the use of MiChat as a

medium for searching for one-night stand partners reflects the transformation of social interactions in the digital era. Through the perspective of Liquid Modernity Theory (Bauman), it is evident that MiChat users prefer temporary and flexible relationships, avoiding long-term commitments for instant gratification. The Network Society Theory (Castells) explains that MiChat facilitates transactional and unsustainable interactions, where relationships are built quickly and easily terminated. Dramaturgy Theory (Goffman) reveals that users create digital identities to attract attention, using "masks" to hide their real identities. Meanwhile, the Theory of Digital Space and Identity (Turkle) emphasizes that relationships in digital spaces tend to be shallow and unsustainable.

Overall, this research shows how digital technology is changing norms, morality, and social interactions, creating new dynamics that challenge traditional values. This phenomenon not only blurs the boundaries between public and private spaces but also provides important insights into the impact of technology on societal structures in the contemporary era.

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