

# Child Grooming (Technology-Based Sexual Harassment) In The Context Of Indonesian Law

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**Citation:** Mahdriyani, Sulvy et.al., 2024. Child Grooming (Technology-Based Sexual Harassment) In The Context Of Indonesian Law. *Int' Journal of Law, Environment, and Natural Resources (INJURLENS)*, 4(1), 91-101

**Academic Editor:** Ali, Mohammad Mahrus  
Received: 26 September 2024  
Revised: 22 October 2024  
Accepted: 22 October 2024  
Published: 23 October 2024

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**Abstract:** Child grooming is a form of sexual harassment that continues to develop because sexual harassment is often carried out directly by the perpetrator, and is often carried out through social media. The perpetrator manipulates Child Grooming by being kind and attentive so that the child believes that the person he has just met is a good person. In Indonesia, Child Grooming is a new type of crime, and is based on existing regulations. The method used in this study is normative legal research. The approach in the research utilizes a legislative approach. The legal materials used in this study are primary legal materials, secondary legal materials, and tertiary legal materials. In the normative law research that is being carried out, the data collection method is by conducting a bibliographic study. The act of Child Grooming is a form of sexual crime that uses minors as targets. Although the Child Protection Law has regulated the protection of children, the existing articles are still limited in regulating obscene acts in general. And in the regulations in Indonesia there are 10 rules or articles that can be imposed on Child Grooming perpetrators.

**Keywords:** Child Grooming; Criminal; Sexual Crimes; Criminal law;

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Human life continues to develop as time goes by (Safaruddin Harahap, 2016). One of them is the advancement of technology such as the Internet. The advancement of internet technology, in addition to bringing positive impacts, also brings negative impacts. The positive impacts are certainly very useful in developing human life, especially in expanding relationships between humans without having to meet face to face. However, there are also negative impacts, such as the increasing variety of types

of crimes that take advantage of technological advances (Griffith & Roth, 2007). Examples of crimes that use this technology are sex crimes and sexual exploitation, which are often carried out online on social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. Sexual crimes against children using this technology can also be classified into various forms, such as child sexual abuse/exploitation (Jamhari, 2012), online pornography, and sexual exploitation. The impacts of sexual crimes against children include making children negative and aggressive, and prone to frustration. Children who are victims also tend to lose their personality. In addition, they have difficulty establishing relationships and communicating with others (Lisanawati, 2013).

*Child Grooming* is a form of sexual harassment that continues to grow because sexual harassment is often carried out directly by the perpetrator, and is often carried out via social media (Fajaruddin, 2014). An example is the provision of images or videos containing pornographic content, which are then traded without the owner's permission. This is a development of crime due to the development of the times, crimes will also become more sophisticated along with the progress of the times. Therefore, the development of technology today allows many crimes to be committed through technology. One of them is maintenance (Salamor et al., 2020). Grooming is a process carried out by adults with the aim of committing sexual violence against children so that they mature sexually faster. Grooming is often done through social media and the internet. The perpetrator manipulates the child by being kind and giving a lot of attention so that the child believes that the person they just met is a good person. Finally, the perpetrator facilitates their behavior by asking to send vulgar photos and videos, inviting the victim to meet, and forcing them to have sex (Agustin et al., 2020). Social media communication that results in sexual activity in this manner is considered Child Grooming (Andaru, 2021). In the case of Child Grooming, the victim is a minor while the perpetrator is old enough. According to Article 1 Point (1) of the Republic of Indonesia Law Number 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection, a minor is someone who is still in the womb until the age of 18 (eighteen) years. Based on Article 330 of the Civil Code, a person who has reached the age of 21 years or is married is considered an adult according to the law.

Forms of child sexual crimes using technology can be categorized into several forms, namely child sexual abuse/exploitation material, online Grooming for sexual purposes, sexting, sexual extortion, and live online child sexual abuse. These forms of sexual crimes against children occur almost everywhere in the world, so they need to be addressed immediately so that children who are the future of the country are not harmed physically, mentally, and morally as a child. Even in Indonesia, in 2019, cases began to be widely discussed whose mode was to lure minors through social media to make video calls or record videos asking them to do things related to their sexual

activities. to satisfy the perpetrator's sexual desires. After recording or making a video call, the perpetrator will distribute the recording to his friends or even worse sell it to other people.

## **2. METHODS**

The method used in this study is normative legal research. Normative legal research is also a study that examines the concept of law as a norm or rule that applies in society and is used as a reference for the behavior of many people (Muhaimin, 2020). The approach in this study utilizes a statutory approach. The legal materials used in this study are primary legal materials, secondary legal materials, and tertiary legal materials. In the normative legal research being conducted, the data collection method is by conducting a bibliography study of legal materials (Nugroho et al., 2020). The prescriptive-normative analysis method is used to analyze the legal materials used in this study. The analysis of this study looks at the responsiveness and purpose of the researcher is to transform existing legal materials into scientific information that can be used to resolve conflicts, especially to find solutions to problems related to research and to study the purpose of legal science itself (Nurhayati, Yati, Ifrani, 2021). Therefore, the basis of the research chosen by the researcher will consist of a detailed, clear, and comprehensive explanation from the formulation of the problem to the conclusion.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **3.1 *Child Grooming As A Criminal Act***

The advancement of internet technology has opened the door to a borderless world, drastically changing the social structure of society. Its contribution to improving human welfare, progress and civilization cannot be ignored (Ramli, 2006). The development of technology has resulted in significant transformations in various aspects of human life today. Access to all activities and needs has become easier thanks to technological advances. Technological developments do not only have a positive impact on individuals and society. There are many criminal acts and violations of rights and norms that are not in accordance with the technological access available today. Therefore, the Indonesian government has regulated the use of technology through Law Number 19 of 2016, which amends Law Number 11 of 2008 concerning Information and Electronic Transactions. On the positive side, the internet allows communication without distance and allows people to connect with each other without meeting face to face. On the negative side, the internet also encourages various types of crimes that take advantage of this technological development (Dilla & Ufran, 2022). Child sexual abuse is one type of crime that takes advantage of technological advances (Gill & Harrison, 2015).

The most common crime is Sexual Harassment. Sexual crimes not only involve adults, but can also make children the perpetrators or victims. One example is sexual crimes against children committed through social media. This crime utilizes technology to communicate, display, and distribute child pornography or sexual activities involving children. The perpetrators can also ask for images or voice recordings of children with erotic content to be distributed (Suendra & Mulyawati, 2020). Based on data from the Online Information System for the Protection of Women and Children (Simfoni PPA), it was recorded that in the period from January to November 2023 there were 15,120 cases of violence against children with 12,158 female victims and 4,691 male victims, where cases of sexual violence ranked first in terms of the number of victims from 2019 to 2023. Sexual harassment against children is a type of violence in which the perpetrator uses children as victims to express their sexual desires. The definition of sexual harassment includes many factors, ranging from inappropriate and indecent comments, jokes, and so on. Indecent acts such as poking, touching, hugging, and so on. Then showing vulgar images or videos, assault and coercion for indecent things, such as forcing the victim to kiss or hug or even threatening to rape if the victim refuses to accept sexual services. The victim, who may not be aware of the harassment, can become a victim of sexual harassment directly or indirectly. According to the National Commission on Violence Against Women, sexual harassment is a sexual act that includes physical or non-physical touching of the victim's genitals or sexual organs. This also includes the use of whistling, seduction, sexual comments, displaying explicit sexual material and desires, poking or touching body parts, movements or gestures of a sexual nature that cause harm, insult, humiliation and can cause problems. with health (physical and mental) and safety.

Criminal law policies in order to protect children from crime have been implemented in the Criminal Code, namely in Article 287 there are provisions regarding the prohibition of having sexual intercourse with women outside of marriage and under the age of fifteen; Article 290 contains a prohibition on committing indecent acts against minors; Article 292 concerning the prohibition of committing indecent acts for adults with minors and of the same gender; Article 293 concerning child molestation by enticing gifts of goods or money; Article 294 concerning child molestation by people who are trusted such as biological, step or adopted fathers/mothers, uncles/aunts, and others; and articles 295-298 which regulate other types of child sexual abuse.

From the perspective of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), child grooming can be described as a process in which someone attempts to build an emotional bond, relationship and trust with a child or young person, with the aim of manipulating, exploiting or even abusing them (Ramadhan, 2020). Children are often victims of sexual violence because they are still vulnerable and do not have the strength to defend themselves. Because of this weakness, adults

often easily take advantage of these children. In Indonesia, the crime of child grooming is a new type of crime. Due to the increasing demand for the sex market worldwide, child grooming in Indonesia, also known as the crime of sexual exploitation of children, is increasing (Andaru, 2021). In Indonesia, a disturbing trend emerged in 2019 where perpetrators used social media to seduce and manipulate minors into engaging in sexual activity. These criminals would make video calls or record videos, asking children to participate in sexual activities to satisfy their own sexual desires. After the recording or video call, the perpetrators would share the content with their friends or, in more extreme cases, sell it to others.

One type of sexual abuse crime that often occurs to children is Child Grooming, Child Grooming is a process of approaching children with the aim of persuading them to engage in sexual activity. In 2019 in Indonesia itself, the act of Child Grooming began to be widely discussed, a case that has a strategy of seducing underage children through social media so that they can make video calls or make video recordings where the child is asked to do things that are closely related to sexual activity in order to satisfy the sexual desires of the perpetrator (who is an adult). According to Seto Mulyadi, a child psychiatrist and Chairman of the National Committee for Child Protection, victims of pedophilia will experience loss of self-confidence and negative views about sex. Both homosexual and heterosexual pedophilia involve underage boys and underage girls.

Child Grooming Crime in Indonesia is a relatively new or rarely discussed type of crime, but it is currently rampant due to the increasing and expanding global sex market demand. This creates space to gain economic benefits through the pornography industry and child trafficking, which can be easily done through grooming. This crime is often found in public chat applications, internet dating, instant messaging, and social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and others. The mode of grooming perpetrators usually involves faking identities, faking profiles, and faking information about themselves to manipulate children and obtain pornographic content from them. Child Grooming is a form of development of sexual abuse that is usually carried out directly, but is now often carried out via social media or the internet. The perpetrator builds a relationship with the child victim to manipulate them into doing what is requested, such as providing sexually explicit photos or videos that can then be misused. This is the use of digital technology with the aim of facilitating sexual interaction with the child victim (Fajaruddin, 2014).

Based on the definition of the international institution Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), Child Grooming can be interpreted as an effort made by someone to build a relationship, trust, and emotional connection with a child or adolescent so that they can manipulate, exploit, and abuse them. Anyone can be a groomer. It doesn't matter how old or what gender. Even based on incidents in the

field, a groomer can emerge from within the family environment itself. The grooming process can last for a short or long time depending on the strategy used by the perpetrator. A successful groomer will be able to build an authoritative image of himself in front of the victim. There are various types of relationships that can be built by a groomer. Gillespie also revealed that grooming is a process in which a child establishes a relationship with the perpetrator of violence with the aim of building trust, which is then used by the perpetrator to gain the child's approval of abusive behavior. Grooming is a process in which adults use manipulative methods to make children mature more quickly in terms of sexuality. Groomers, called groomers, use modes such as being a good friend and giving attention to build a child's trust. They then manipulate the child to tell stories freely, making the child unaware of the dangers that occur. Groomers are categorized as preferential perpetrators, who tend to orient their sexual desires towards a child and target children as victims to be sexually exploited.

Cyber Child Grooming is done with various types, durations and intensities depending on the characteristics and behavior of each perpetrator. Among the various ways and variations in doing online Child Grooming, there are six general things that underlie cyber Child Grooming, namely (Sitompul, 2004):

1. **Manipulation:** Cyber Child Grooming uses various techniques to increase the perpetrator's power and control over the victim and increase the victim's dependence on the perpetrator, such as giving compliments to make the victim feel special until the victim is interested and lets down their guard. This technique is used to make the victim feel loved and respected. The perpetrator, on the other hand, can control the victim by intimidating them so that they feel afraid of the perpetrator and do not dare to tell.
2. **Accessibility:** Ease One component of online child grooming is the ability to interact with the victim. The perpetrator can access the victim via the internet without having to meet them in person or reveal their real identity. The perpetrator can control the victim with just a mobile phone or electronic device, and can even collect the child's information data. In reality, parents are more careful when interacting directly with their children. Still, they are less involved in their child's online life and are not vigilant about their online interactions. Studies show that twenty percent of children who use social media and twenty percent of the 9–12 year old group have talked to a stranger over the internet. The perpetrator interacts with the victim in one or two ways through chat rooms, blogs, social media, forums, or newsletters.
3. **Rapport Building:** As part of building a relationship, the perpetrator adjusts his behavior and communication style so that the victim feels comfortable talking to the perpetrator who then commits the crime. In addition, the perpetrator finds out the interests and circumstances around the victim, what the victim likes or

what attracts the victim and what the environment around the victim is like, so that when the victim is off guard the perpetrator will start his actions. So that the actions taken by the perpetrator with the victim are not known by others, the perpetrator usually asks the victim to keep their relationship a secret.

4. **Sexual Context:** Sexual intercourse is the goal of online Child Grooming. When and how sexual intercourse begins depends on each perpetrator. The perpetrator will start in a gradual way, so that the victim will not be suspicious. To start sexual intercourse can be done in various ways such as talking dirty, seducing the victim, sending pornographic images or connecting to things that smell of pornography.
5. **Risk Assessment:** Risk assessment of the victim is carried out before and during online Child Grooming. Risk assessment is seen from several aspects, namely the individual victim, factors related to the internet and the surrounding environment. In addition, the perpetrator carries out risk management. There are three ways that the perpetrator does in risk management, namely:
  - a. Regarding the perpetrators and the technology used To prevent the perpetrators from being traced or identified, they use different storage methods, different IP addresses, and different hardware.
  - b. The perpetrator refrains from communicating with the victim in public spaces and prefers to use personal email or mobile phones.
  - c. The perpetrators visited the victims from a distance. The study showed that all perpetrators did not use risk management because they thought they had done nothing wrong and therefore had nothing to hide.
6. **Deception:** In online Child Grooming, sometimes the perpetrators disguise themselves as peers or young people. Research shows that 5% of perpetrators disguise themselves as young people when communicating with victims. Most perpetrators tell their victims that they are adults who want to build a special relationship with the victim. Most victims meet the perpetrators in person and have sex. So it can be concluded that most victims are aware that they are communicating with adults and take the risk of interacting with the perpetrators.

In the context of Indonesian law, Child Grooming is not explicitly regulated as a separate criminal offense in the legislation. However, Child Grooming can include a series of unlawful acts, such as fraud, rape, sexual harassment, or child molestation. Therefore, the handling of Child Grooming often uses the provisions contained in the laws and regulations governing sexual crimes and child protection. However, technological developments and changes in social behavior have complicated the understanding and handling of Child Grooming. With the increasing use of the internet and social media, Child Grooming perpetrators often use digital platforms to find and

build relationships with minors. They often disguise themselves as peers or trusted people, then take advantage of the trust they build to manipulate the children.

In the international context, many countries have adopted international laws or conventions that specifically regulate Child Grooming. For example, in the United States, a federal law known as "The Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act" regulates issues related to sexual crimes against children, including Child Grooming. In Europe, several countries have adopted conventions such as The Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse which regulates Child Grooming as a form of sexual violence against children. Child Grooming as a crime itself has been proposed since 1921 in The International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children, but until now only a handful of countries regulate Child Grooming as a separate crime. One of them is in the UK, in the Sexual Offences Act 2003, an adult can be accused of being a Child Grooming perpetrator if they routinely communicate and meet without a clear reason with a child under the age of 16 even though there are no sexual elements and can be punished up to 14 years in prison.

Child Grooming is a form of sexual crime that uses minors as targets. Although the Child Protection Law has regulated the protection of children, including in terms of sexual crimes, the existing articles are still limited in regulating general indecent acts. This causes the inability of the law to ensnare perpetrators of Child Grooming because the act does not meet the elements regulated in the existing articles. Therefore, protection of children, especially from Child Grooming, should be carried out using *lex specialis*, namely the Child Protection Law, which has specificity and clarity in addressing child protection issues, including in dealing with the crime of Child Grooming.

### **3.2. Implementation of the Law for Child Grooming Perpetrators**

There are several laws and regulations that can be imposed on perpetrators of Child Grooming (Mahardika et al., 2020):

1. Article 282 of the Criminal Code (KUHP)
2. Article 290 of the Criminal Code (KUHP)
3. Article 415 of Law No. 1 of 2023 concerning the Criminal Code
4. Article 76D Law no. 35 of 2014 concerning amendments to Law no. 23 of 2002 concerning child protection.
5. Article 76E Law no. 35 of 2014 concerning amendments to Law no. 23 of 2002 concerning child protection.
6. Article 5 of Law No. 12 of 2022 concerning Criminal Acts of Sexual Violence
7. Article 6 Letters a, b, c of Law No. 12 of 2022 concerning Criminal Acts of Sexual Violence

8. Article 12 of Law No. 12 of 2022 concerning Criminal Acts of Sexual Violence
9. Article 14 of Law No. 12 of 2022 concerning Criminal Acts of Sexual Violence
10. Article 27 paragraph (1) of Law No. 19 of 2016 concerning amendments to Law No. 11 of 2008 concerning Electronic Information and Transactions

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

The forms of child sexual crimes using technology can be categorized into several types, such as the distribution of child sexual exploitation materials, online approaches for sexual purposes, sexting, sexual blackmail, and live broadcasts of child sexual abuse online. Their conversations are more directed at sexual matters and teach victims about pornography. Finally, this can lead to physical meetings that result in sexual violence against children, resulting in indecency and violence. "Cyber Child Grooming itself is carried out with various types, durations and intensities depending on the characteristics and behavior of each perpetrator. Among the various methods and variations in carrying out online Child Grooming, there are six common things that underlie cyber Child Grooming, namely: Manipulation, Accessibility, Rapport Building, Sexual Context, Risk Assessment, Deception. Legally, Child Grooming has been recognized as a criminal offense in many jurisdictions around the world, including Indonesia. In the context of Indonesian law, Child Grooming is not explicitly regulated as a separate criminal offense in legislation. However, Child Grooming actions can include a series of unlawful acts, such as fraud, rape, sexual harassment, or child molestation. "Therefore, the handling of Child Grooming often uses the provisions contained in the laws and regulations governing sexual crimes and child protection. In the Child Protection Law, there are provisions for the protection of children, including in terms of sexual crimes, but the existing articles are still limited to the regulation of general indecent acts. This causes the inability of the law to ensnare the perpetrators of Child Grooming because the act does not meet the elements regulated in the existing articles. Therefore, protection of children, especially from Child Grooming, should be carried out using *lex specialis*, namely the Child Protection Law, which has specificity and clarity in addressing child protection issues, including in dealing with the crime of Child Grooming.

Although the laws and regulations in Indonesia do not clearly regulate Child Grooming, perpetrators who are caught doing Child Grooming are subject to 10 articles contained in various laws and regulations in Indonesia, which are compiled based on their actions, namely: Article 282 of the Criminal Code (KUHP), Article 290 of the Criminal Code (KUHP), Article 415 of Law No. 1 of 2023 concerning the Criminal Code 41, Article 76D of Law No. 35 of 2014 concerning amendments to Law No. 23 of 2002 concerning child protection, Article 76E of Law No. 35 of 2014 concerning amendments

to Law No. 23 of 2002 concerning child protection, Article 5 of Law No. 12 of 2022 concerning Criminal Acts of Sexual Violence, Article 6 Letter a, Letter b, Letter c of Law No. 12 of 2022 concerning Criminal Acts of Sexual Violence, Article 12 of Law No. 12 of 2022 concerning Criminal Acts of Sexual Violence, Article 14 of Law No. 12 of 2022 concerning Criminal Acts of Sexual Violence, Article 27 paragraph (1) of Law No. 19 of 2016 concerning amendments to Law No. 11 of 2008 concerning Information and Electronic Transactions.

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