




Child Grooming Approach Model of Offenders toward Children on Social Media

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Abstract: Crimes against children are getting higher and more diverse. One of them that is currently rampant is the case of Child Grooming which targets children through the use of social media. This research aims to discuss how child grooming perpetrators approach child victims through social media. The online Child Grooming mode on social media is considered a mode that is quite widely used by perpetrators who are also children because perpetrators can easily trick victims virtually with different social media accounts. The theory used in this research is Space Transition theory. The research subjects were 3 child grooming offenders (X, Y, and Z) who were classified as children. This research uses qualitative method with descriptive analysis approach technique. The results showed that child grooming perpetrators use various approaches to approach their victims. The perpetrator will try to build a relationship to gain the victim's trust. Afterward, the perpetrator will use his control so that the victim complies with the perpetrator's wishes. After the victim is trapped by seduction and the perpetrator succeeds in committing sexual acts, the perpetrator will make threats with the aim that the victim is silent and wants to maintain a relationship with the perpetrator.

Keywords: *Child Grooming, Perpetrator, Child, Social Media, Space Transition Theory*

Abstrak: Tindak kejahatan pada anak saat ini semakin tinggi dan semakin beragam bentuknya. Salah satunya yang saat ini marak terjadi adalah kasus Child Grooming yang menargetkan anak melalui penggunaan media sosial. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk membahas tentang bagaimana pelaku Child Grooming melakukan pendekatan kepada korban anak melalui media sosial. Modus Child Grooming secara online di media sosial dianggap sebagai modus yang cukup banyak digunakan oleh pelaku yang juga masih berusia anak-anak karena pelaku dapat dengan mudah mengelabui korban secara virtual dengan akun media sosial yang berbeda. Teori yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah teori Space Transition. Subjek penelitian adalah 3 pelaku Child Grooming (X, Y, dan Z) yang tergolong anak-anak. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan teknik pendekatan analisis deskriptif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pelaku Child Grooming menggunakan berbagai cara pendekatan untuk mendekati korbannya. Pelaku akan berusaha membangun sebuah hubungan untuk mendapatkan kepercayaan korban. Setelahnya, pelaku akan menggunakan kontrol miliknya agar korban menuruti keinginan pelaku. Setelah korban terperangkap bujuk rayuan dan pelaku berhasil melakukan tindakan seksual, pelaku akan memberikan ancaman dengan tujuan agar korban diam dan mau mempertahankan hubungan dengan pelaku.

Kata Kunci: *Child Grooming, Pelaku, Anak, Media Sosial, Teori Space Transition*

INTRODUCTION

Along with the times, the development of technology and communication has grown rapidly. One of the striking results is the presence of social media. According to Carr and Hayes, social media is internet media that makes it easy for users to introduce themselves and interact with others, both directly and indirectly, thus encouraging the existence of common values and perceptions with others.¹ The presence of social media can

¹Carr, Caleb T dan Hayes Rebecca A. "Social Media: Defining, Developing, and Divining." *Journal of Communication*, (2015): 46.

facilitate communication and be able to connect between people without the need to meet directly. However, the existence of social media can also lead to various crimes that arise with various modes by utilizing this technological advancement.² This is caused by the behavior of individuals who misuse social media solely for personal gain and result in harming other social media users.

One of the crimes arising from the increasing prevalence of crime in social media is Online Gender-Based Violence (KBGO). The type of Online Gender-Based Violence (GBV) that is currently a new mode of crime on social media is Child Grooming.³ This is an act of manipulation carried out by someone with the intent and purpose of attracting children and building a close relationship with them, with the intention of committing sexual acts in the future.⁴ In this case, the reason children are often targeted by Child Grooming is because children do not fully understand how to use internet access properly. This usually occurs due to a lack of supervision from parents over children accessing the internet and using social media.

In this case, the main purpose of someone practicing child grooming is divided into several things, such as gaining trust, obtaining intimate data (such as sexual conversations, pictures, or videos), threatening, extorting material, so that children are vulnerable to becoming victims.⁵ Often the perpetrators of child grooming will carry out their actions gradually and

²Alviani, Sisi Renia., dan Gusnita, Chazizah. "Analisis media sosial sebagai pembentuk konflik sosial di masyarakat." *Open Society Conference*. (2018).

³Andaru, Imara Pramesti Normalita. "Cyber Child Grooming sebagai Bentuk Kekerasan Berbasis Gender Online di Era Pandemi." *Jurnal Wanita dan Keluarga*, (2021): 41-51.

⁴NSPCC. "New Figures Reveal Four In Five Victims Of Online Grooming Crimes." (2021) <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/about-us/news-opinion/2021/online-grooming-crimes-girls/> (diakses 7 Februari 2023)

⁵Dilla, Rezkina Dilla., dan Ufran. "Efektivitas Penanggulangan Tindak Pidana Child Grooming di Indonesia." *Indonesia Berdaya*, (2023): 383-388.

continuously, so that indirectly the victim will have a dependence on the perpetrator.

Child grooming can occur in various places, including within families, schools, and has even spread online.⁶ Therefore, child grooming can be said to be very dangerous if allowed to continue to occur. So it is necessary to protect and educate children so that they are not trapped by the perpetrators that is expected not to increase the number of victims.

Report data from KPAI (Indonesian Child Protection Commission) noted an increase in child pornography cases during the Covid-19 pandemic carried out through social media.⁷

Table 1
Trends in Pornography and Cyber Crime Cases 2016-2020

Category	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Pornography and Cyber Crime	497	480	458	430	592	2457
Child victims of online sexual crimes	112	126	116	87	103	
Child sexual offender online	94	102	96	101	9	
Child victims of social media pornography	188	142	134	148	91	
Child pornographic media possession offenders (HP/Video, et al)	103	110	112	94	389	

According to the table above, although the number of cases tends to fluctuate, it cannot be denied that the number of cases of sexual crimes on social media involving children tends to increase. This shows an increase in cases of both children as perpetrators and victims of sexual crimes on social

⁶Childnet International (Childnet). "Child Grooming." (2021): <https://www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers/hot-topics/sexual-grooming> (diakses 7 Februari 2023)

⁷Komisi Perlindungan Anak Indonesia (KPAI). "Bank Data Perlindungan Anak." (2021): <https://bankdata.kpai.go.id/tabulasi-data/data-kasus-perlindungan-anak-2016-2020> (diakses 1 Maret 2023)

media. Therefore, supervision and vigilance regarding this crime is necessary to minimize the increase in the number of cases.

In addition, at least 6,519 cases occurred during 2020, a 49 percent increase from the 4,369 cases recorded in 2019. Around 1,622 cases involved physical violence against children, while sexual abuse accounted for at least 592 cases. Therefore, child grooming can also be considered as child sexual exploitation even though it is consensual. Uniquely, not only in physical contact, Child Grooming can also unwittingly occur through the use of technology.⁸ The high spread of Child Grooming cases is also characterized by various cases that occurred in Indonesia. Here are some examples of cases, in 2019, a man in Palembang was arrested for grooming a high school student. The perpetrator was known to approach the victim by sending sexual messages and asking the victim to have sexual intercourse with him.⁹ Furthermore, in 2021, a British citizen was arrested in Bali for grooming a minor. The perpetrator contacted the child through social media, asked to meet, and then persuaded the child to have sexual intercourse.¹⁰ Most recently, in 2022, an elementary school teacher in Jakarta was arrested for grooming two underage schoolgirls. The perpetrator had sent sexual messages and asked the girls to perform sexual acts through video calls.¹¹

⁸Van de Vijver, Kathleen., & Harvey, Rebecca. "Child sexual exploitation (CSE): Applying A Systemic Understanding Of 'Grooming' And The Model To Aid Second Order Change." *Journal of Family Therapy*, (2019). 447–464.

⁹Republika. "Diduga Grooming, Pria Ini Diciduk di Palembang." <https://www.republika.co.id/berita/nasional/hukum/19/01%20/29/pdbaxn384-diduga-grooming-pria-ini-diciduk-di-palembang> (diakses 7 Februari 2023)

¹⁰Kompas. "WNI Inggris Ditangkap di Bali karena Grooming Anak di Bawah Umur." <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2021/03/23/19320291/%20wni-inggris-ditangkap-di-bali-karena-grooming-anak-di-bawah-umur> (diakses 14 Februari 2023)

¹¹CNN Indonesia. "Guru SD di Jakarta Diamankan karena Grooming Siswi-siswinya" <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20220119143832->

Child Grooming has many victims, which in this case leads to children. This shows that it is very influential in the negative impact for immature children in using social media facilities without more supervision from people around.¹² It is necessary to pay attention to children when using social media so that they do not become perpetrators or victims of Child Grooming, which is a crime model that is arguably quite difficult to eradicate. This is because in this case, the media used to commit this crime is social media which has a very broad scope. Moreover, the perpetrators of Child Grooming are now not only adults, but minors are also capable of becoming perpetrators of this crime.

Seeing the increasing number of child grooming cases that continue to occur is certainly a warning. Moreover, the approach model of child grooming perpetrators is increasingly diverse. Therefore, this research aims to discuss in more depth how the Child Grooming perpetrator's approach model towards victims conducted on social media.

METHOD

This research uses qualitative method approach with the output results in the form of descriptive analysis.¹³ The purpose of this research is to examine more deeply the Child Grooming approach model carried out by the research subjects. The description of the analysis written in this research will be connected to the understanding of the Space Transition theory. Data collection techniques were carried out by means of direct interviews in the form of conducting questions and answers with the perpetrators of Child

[12747150/guru-sd-di-jakarta-diamankan-karena-grooming-siswi-siswinya](https://doi.org/10.24127/12747150/guru-sd-di-jakarta-diamankan-karena-grooming-siswi-siswinya) (diakses 14 Februari 2023)

¹²Holivia, Anjeli, dan Suratman, Teguh. "Child Cyber Grooming Sebagai Bentuk Modus Baru Cyber Space Crimes." *Bhirawa Law Journal*, 2021: 1-13.

¹³Suyanto, Bagong., & Sutinah. *Metode Penelitian Sosial Berbagai Alternatif Pendekatan*. Jakarta: Kencana Prenada Media Group (2013).

Grooming cases, as well as observations made with the aim that the research subjects knew more clearly the purpose and objectives of the research.

This research was conducted at the Social Rehabilitation Center for Children in Need of Special Protection (BRSAMPK) "Handayani". The subjects chosen in this study are three child grooming perpetrators X, Y, and Z who are still classified as children. This research began on February 22, 2023 for processing research permit files to BRSAMPK "Handayani". Then on March 3rd, 2023, the permission letter was received. On March 7th, 2023, direct interviews with perpetrator X were conducted for 1 hour. Furthermore, on March 8th, 2023, direct interviews were again conducted with offender Y for 2 hours and offender Z for approximately 1 hour. The results of the interviews were then documented using a recording device from a mobile phone and a notebook.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

In committing the crime of Child Grooming, perpetrators X, Y and Z approached the victim with several aspects such as trying to manipulate the victim by building a trusting relationship over a period of days, weeks, months, and years. This time span is used by the perpetrator to spend more time with the victim in order to lay the foundation of trust for sexual acts that will be carried out in the future.

As we know, Child Grooming is a manipulative behavior used by perpetrators to gain access to potential victims. Perpetrators X, Y and Z claimed that they would coerce victims in this way to get them to consent to the abuse and threaten to reduce the risk of arrest. This form of child abuse

can occur in a variety of places, including on social media, in person, and through other means of communication.¹⁴

Lack of supervision from parents and the surrounding environment in using social media can be said to be one of the causes of the increasing cases of child grooming in children. This is also supported by the results of research, which found that there are perpetrators X, Y, and Z who are also categorized into child perpetrators of child grooming cases, who admit to use social media to groom their victims. The three perpetrators admitted using Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp as medium of communication with their victims. The perpetrators explained the reason for using social media as an intermediary for grooming is because it has easier access and quickly provides feedback from victims.

In addition, perpetrators X, Y, and Z revealed that the use of social media also made it easier for them to find information and manipulate victims. The perpetrator will make the victim feel as if they are being privileged and provide them with excessive attention. So that the victim is finally really interested and the perpetrator will take advantage of that to plunge the victim so that whatever the perpetrator wants can be obeyed by the victim.¹⁵

In this case, most victims usually still do not realize that they have become victims of Child Grooming.¹⁶ Besides, another reason is that victims choose not to disclose their experiences due to a lack of awareness about

¹⁴RAINN. "Grooming: Know the Warning Signs." <https://www.rainn.org/news/grooming-know-warning-signs> (diakses 15 Februari 2023).

¹⁵Putri, Anindita Irvanya dan Gusnita, Chazizah. "Modus Online Child Grooming di Aplikasi Game Online (Studi Kasus Minecraft Dan Hago)." (2022).

¹⁶Whittle, Helen., Hamilton-Giachritsis, Catherine., Beech, Anthony., dan Collings, Guy. "A Review Of Young People's Vulnerabilities To Online Grooming." *Aggression and Violent Behavior* (2013).

where to report or who to talk to, feelings of having done something wrong, thinking no one will understand them, concerns about getting into trouble, feelings of shame, and will cause problems for the family. Therefore, education to the public, especially children, regarding Child Grooming as a new mode of sexual crime needs to be improved in order to minimize the increase of cases.

Approach Model for Child Grooming Offenders on Social Media

In this study, it was found that the approach models between perpetrators X, Y and Z in conducting Child Grooming are similar. The three perpetrators said that in attracting their victims, several stages were needed until finally the perpetrator managed to take complete control of the victim. This is done so that a series of planned strategies can be achieved. In addition, according to the perpetrators, in the process of approaching the victim, there is no need to rush. This is because the approach process is the most important point in order to build the victim's trust so that the victim is unconsciously trapped by the perpetrator's tactics.¹⁷

The following are some of the approach models of perpetrators X, Y, and Z in grooming victims on social media:

a. Building Relationship

The perpetrator will try to build an intimate relationship in order to gain the victim's trust. For example, in the case of perpetrators X, Y, and Z. Based on the results of the research, both perpetrators X, Y, and Z are known to use the same method, namely by approaching and seducing the victim intensely in order to build a good relationship and gain the victim's trust. In this case, the perpetrators will continue to take advantage of all

¹⁷NSPCC. "What Is Child Abuse Types Of Abuse Child Sexual Exploitation?" <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/child-sexual-exploitation/> (diakses pada 12 April 2023)

opportunities to make the victim feel comfortable relating to them, so that over time the victim will be more attracted to the perpetrator and finally want to have a relationship with the perpetrator.

b. Power and Control

The use of power and control is done with the aim of manipulating the victim. For example, perpetrator X claimed to have succeeded in gaining power and control over the victim by continuously providing words of encouragement that made the victim feel that she always needed the perpetrator, until finally victim X granted the perpetrator's words to break up with her previous boyfriend. Then, the perpetrator tricked the victim into wanting to have a relationship that would later lead to sexual matters with X.

Perpetrator Y claimed to gain power and control when victim Y complied with Y's desire to break up with her boyfriend. After that, the victim finally wanted to be invited to have sexual intercourse until she became pregnant and eventually married to Y. Not only that, Y also claimed to have other victims whom Y used not only for sexual needs but also to get money. Perpetrator Y admitted to doing this by having video call sex with the victims he found on social media, especially on Instagram.

Unlike perpetrators X and Y, perpetrator Z claimed to have gained power and control over the victim because he took advantage of the victim's attraction to the perpetrator. Feeling benefited, Z eventually used this to take control of the victim so that the victim would obey whatever Z wanted for his benefit in terms of sexuality.

c. Bribery

Perpetrators will offer gifts, money, or other incentives to children in exchange for sexual acts or to gain their compliance. In this case, perpetrators X, and Z did the same thing, where if they had received sexual satisfaction from the victim then the two perpetrators would provide rewards in the form of goods or pocket money for the victim. Meanwhile, perpetrator Y admitted to bribing only the victim who was also targeted to become his girlfriend and did not do this for other victims who were only used not only in terms of sexual satisfaction but also in terms of material.

d. Threats

Perpetrators will use threats or intimidation to force children to perform sexual acts or to keep them from telling anyone about the abuse. In this case, perpetrators X, Y, and Z all made threats to the victim so that what the perpetrators did would not be known by others.

e. Seduction

The perpetrator will use charm, flattery, and tactics to seduce and create a sense of intimacy to create false trust with the victim. Like perpetrators X, Y, and Z, they will use all kinds of seduction and sweet promises so that the victim is flattered and indirectly falls for the intention of the perpetrator. Afterwards, the perpetrator will take advantage from the victim.

A Space Transition Theory Analysis of Child Grooming Offenders on Social Media

In the context of child grooming, changes in technology and social media are considered to greatly influence how perpetrators groom children. This can also be linked to the Space Transition theory. Just as perpetrators X, Y and Z did, the Space Transition theory also explains that grooming

perpetrators will utilize a new space or environment, in this case social media, to build an emotional connection with the victim until they finally succeed in manipulating the victim until the perpetrator's goal is achieved. This is also supported by various assumptions of Space Transition theory related to Child Grooming. The following are the theoretical assumptions that underlie the formation of Space Transition Theory which are linked to the discussion of this research.¹⁸

a. Cyberspace

The Child Grooming process is often carried out through social media with intention such as seducing children underage to make video calls or recording videos to do things that smell of sexuality. This process can be explained through how the perpetrator approaches the victim.

What is worth highlighting in this research is that the perpetrator of Child Grooming is not only an adult but also children. According to perpetrators X, Y and Z, the virtual world, especially social media, is a field for them to seek sexual satisfaction. If left further, it will certainly be able to cause children to change when they are in real life and social media.

b. Criminal in Cyberspace

In this study, the crimes committed by perpetrators X, Y and Z who are still classified as children cannot be understood instantly. Usually, it will be a debate about why and how children can commit such crimes. Some of the reasons that can lead to a child becoming a child grooming offender include lack of education or awareness,

¹⁸Jaishankar, Karuppanan. "Space Transition Theory of Cyber Crimes." *Crimes of the Internet*, 283-301 (2008).

exposure to inappropriate content, desire for power and control, lack of supervision or guidance, history of abuse or trauma.¹⁹

Therefore, it is important to note that Child Grooming is a serious crime that can have long-term effects on both the victim and the perpetrator. Parents and guardians can help prevent Child Grooming by educating their children about healthy boundaries, monitoring their online activities, and providing them with guidance and support.

c. Electronic Communication

In this era of digital advancement, children such as X, Y, and Z actors tend to always engage in electronic communication activities such as chatting, video calling, or playing online games. It is explained that when children spend a lot of time involved in online communication activities, they may have difficulty in distinguishing between the real world and the imaginary world. In the cases experienced by perpetrators X, Y, and Z, the presence of electronic communication in children can allow for the transition of space between the virtual and real worlds.

d. Space Transition

According to perpetrators X, Y and Z, spatial transition is beneficial. Perpetrators such as those in this study consider spatial transition to make it easier for them to use fake identities and maintain anonymity to deceive or trick victims and make them feel safe. This fact makes it easier for perpetrators to groom. In addition, spatial

¹⁹Republika. "Tangkal Fenomena Child Grooming, Psikolog: Pentingnya Keterbukaan Anak dan Orang Tua." <https://ameera.republika.co.id/berita/rqydw8425/tangkal-fenomena-child-grooming-psikolog-pentingnya-keterbukaan-anak-dan-orang-tua> (diakses 26 Mei 2023)

transitions can allow offenders to build relationships with victims through electronic communication in cyberspace, and then utilize these spatial transitions to turn these relationships into real-world relationships.

CONCLUSION

This research result concludes that child grooming perpetrators have several stages in the process of approaching victims. These include relationship building, power and control, bribery, threats and seduction. If the five stages have executed well, then the grooming mode carried out by the perpetrator will continue to execute.

This crime is committed in various ways. As done by perpetrators X, Y, and Z, the three perpetrators tried to approach, seduce, and establish an emotional relationship with a child through communication on social media with the aim of gaining trust, so that in the end they can exploit their victims for sexual satisfaction. What must be highlighted is that perpetrators X, Y, and Z committed the crime of child grooming while they were still underage. Therefore, this should certainly be a warning. Some of the reasons a child can become a child grooming offender are due to lack of education or awareness, exposure to inappropriate content, desire for power and control, lack of supervision or guidance, and history of abuse or trauma. Child Grooming is a serious crime that can have long-term effects on both the victim and the perpetrator. Therefore, in order to minimize the increase in cases, it is necessary to educate and supervise more children regarding Child Grooming as a new mode of sexual crime that should be watched out for.

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