



Reformulation of Legal Policy for the Protection of Generation Z from the Threat of Child Grooming: An Islamic Law and Convention on the Rights of the Child Perspective

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Abstract: Child grooming cases experienced by children in Indonesia, particularly through digital platforms such as Instagram and WhatsApp, reflect the existence of normative gaps (lacunae) in the legal protection system for Generation Z amid the rapid digital era. This crime is carried out covertly and systematically by adults who manipulate victims. This research aims to formulate effective legal policy reforms to tackle the threat of child grooming, referring to the perspective of Islamic Law and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). This research uses a normative method with legislative, conceptual, and comparative approaches, supported by data in the form of national legal documents, Islamic legal literature (including the concepts of *hifzh al-nafs* and *hifzh al-'irdh*), and international legal instruments. The research findings show that national legislation has not explicitly regulated child grooming offenses, thus creating gaps in law enforcement. The scientific contribution of this study is to produce a comprehensive legal framework through synthesis between the principles of protection of honor and life in Islamic Law and the minimum standards of child protection in the CRC. It is concluded that legal policy reform is urgent, which must be realized by explicitly including the formulation of child grooming offenses in legislation. This reformulation not only closes interpretive gaps and ensures legal certainty, but also strengthens legal protection for Generation Z in digital spaces by uniting Islamic philosophical values and international standards.

Keywords: Legal Protection, Child Grooming, Generation Z, Reformulation, Islamic Law

1. Introduction

Various cases of child grooming in Indonesia reflect the weakness of legal protection for children in the digital world. Perpetrators often disguise themselves as peers to approach and deceive victims, indicating a low level of digital literacy and the lack of specific regulations addressing this crime. Child grooming constitutes a violation of children's rights as stipulated in the Child Protection Law. Although Indonesia has enacted several legal instruments to protect children, there is still no specific provision that explicitly regulates or criminalizes child grooming (Siregar, Dedi Martua, Talitha Aisyah Oksahaddini, 2021).

Law Number 35 of 2014 on Child Protection and Law Number 19 of 2016, which amends Law Number 11 of 2008 on Electronic Information and Transactions, provide a legal framework for protecting children from sexual crimes, including child grooming practices (Salsabila Amilda, Yasmin Luthfiah Sutari, M. Arief Aqil Audi, 2025).

Law Number 35 of 2014 on Child Protection affirms that every child has the right to protection from violence and sexual exploitation. However, this provision does not specifically regulate criminal modes of operation conducted through digital media. Similarly, Law Number 19 of 2016 on Electronic Information and Transactions (ITE Law) primarily focuses on addressing harmful content and its dissemination, without specifically regulating the psychological manipulation of children as occurs in grooming cases. Government efforts to combat sexual violence have shown some progress with the enactment of Law Number 12 of 2022 on Sexual Violence Crimes, which begins to incorporate elements of technology-facilitated sexual violence. Nevertheless, the practice of

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child grooming—through persuasion, deception, and emotional manipulation—has yet to be clearly defined within the national legal framework.

In the context of special protection, Government Regulation Number 70 of 2020 on the Procedures for the Implementation of Children's Rights to Special Protection does include protection against cybercrime. However, it still lacks specific approaches or strategies to detect and address grooming practices in both preventive and repressive ways.

The advancement of digital technology has had a significant impact on the social lives of children, particularly Generation Z, who are growing up in an increasingly online environment. Platforms such as Instagram and instant messaging applications like WhatsApp have become new spaces for interaction, but at the same time, they also increase children's vulnerability to cybercrimes, including child grooming (Hardianti et al., 2023). Child grooming represents a serious threat to the safety and well-being of children in the digital age (Yogo et al., 2024). One increasingly alarming form of crime is sexual harassment of children via social media, where adult perpetrators gradually build relationships with children for the purpose of sexual exploitation (Dilla & Ufran, 2022). These actions are carried out subtly, systematically, and often go unnoticed by both the victims and their parents. This situation poses a significant challenge to child protection efforts in Indonesia.

From the perspective of Islamic law, children are a trust (*amanah*) that must be protected from all forms of violence, including sexual violence that occurs covertly through digital media. Legally ensuring the rights of children is an essential part of efforts to promote their well-being and secure a dignified future (Mendrofa & Harahap, 2025). The principle of *maslahah* (public interest), along with the prohibition of *ta'zīr* for actions that harm a child's morality, provides a strong normative foundation for rejecting all forms of child exploitation. Islamic law also emphasizes preventive measures, including moral education, the active role of the family in supervision, and the social responsibility of the community in creating a safe and dignified environment for children's development. Therefore, these principles are highly relevant as a foundation for formulating legal policies that are adaptive to the challenges of the digital age.

In addition to national law and Islamic legal principles, the international legal framework also provides an important foundation through the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which was ratified by Indonesia through Presidential Decree No. 36 of 1990. The Convention obliges state parties to take legislative, administrative, social, and educational measures to protect children from all forms of violence, including sexual violence and exploitation in digital spaces, as stipulated in Articles 19 and 34. Indonesia's commitment to this Convention necessitates the alignment of national legal policies with international standards, particularly in terms of prevention, protection, and recovery for victims of technology-facilitated sexual violence. Therefore, synergy between national law, Islamic legal teachings, and international instruments constitutes a strategic approach to strengthening the legal protection system for Indonesian children—especially Generation Z, who are particularly vulnerable to covert forms of crime such as child grooming in the digital era.

Based on the aforementioned background, this study aims to formulate a reformulation of legal policy concerning the protection of children from the threat of child grooming by examining the perspectives of Islamic law and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This research adopts a normative legal approach through the analysis of existing regulations, principles of Islamic law, and provisions of international law. The data sources include national legal documents, references from both classical and contemporary Islamic legal scholarship, as well as relevant international conventions. This study is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to strengthening the legal protection system for Generation Z.

This research offers a significant contribution to the development and reform of law, both in the present and the future, by comprehensively examining the integration of national law, Islamic law, and international legal provisions in formulating policies for the

protection of children from child grooming. By identifying various gaps and ambiguities in the existing regulations, this study presents an alternative policy framework that is more relevant and responsive to the rapid advancement of digital technology and the evolving patterns of cybercrime. Furthermore, the findings of this research are expected to serve as both a theoretical and practical reference for policymakers in drafting more effective regulations to address the challenges of child protection in the digital era—while also aligning with human rights principles and Islamic legal teachings. The resulting policy reformulation is expected to enhance efforts in both the prevention and legal enforcement of child grooming offenses in a more effective and just manner.

2. Materials and Methods

This study employs a normative juridical method with a qualitative approach, conducted through a literature review to analyze legal provisions within the scope of national law, Islamic law, and international law. The applied approaches include the statute approach, which examines regulations related to child protection and cybercrime; the conceptual approach, which explores the meaning of child grooming and child protection from the perspectives of Islamic law and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); and the comparative approach, which investigates the similarities and differences among the three legal systems (Karsoma, 2020). This research is prescriptive in nature, aiming to formulate ideal and comprehensive legal policy recommendations to protect Generation Z from the threat of child grooming.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Patterns and Strategies of Child Grooming Developing in the Digital Era

Child grooming is a form of manipulation carried out by adults to establish an emotional relationship with children, with the aim of sexually exploiting them. In today's digital era, this practice has expanded alongside the increasing use of the internet and social media by children, particularly among Generation Z. Child cyber grooming refers to sexual offenses against children conducted through social media platforms, where perpetrators are typically adult males (Holivia & Suratman, 2021). Perpetrators exploit the closed and difficult-to-monitor nature of digital spaces to carry out their actions, often disguising themselves as peers and hiding their true identities. The lack of open communication between children and parents, as well as the limited specialized education regarding the dangers of child grooming, further increase children's vulnerability. The emotional manipulation tactics used by perpetrators are often difficult to detect as they do not manifest physically like direct sexual abuse (Siwi & Rahmiaji, 2025). This situation poses a significant challenge to child protection efforts in the digital realm.

In the digital era, the pattern of child grooming typically begins with the search for targets through widely used social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, or WhatsApp. Perpetrators observe publicly accessible accounts of children and initiate interaction with a friendly and non-suspicious approach. After establishing initial communication, perpetrators exploit the private messaging features available on social media to continue their actions (Athaya Naurah Fa Nu'ma; Muchamad Iksan, 2014). Gradually, they build trust and emotional closeness with the victims. Elementary school-aged children become particularly vulnerable targets due to their limited understanding of gender differences (Hendarwati et al., 2024). At this stage, perpetrators often disguise themselves as peers, pretending to share similar interests or showing concern for the problems faced by the child.

This stage is known as the "trust-building" phase, which is a crucial part of the child grooming strategy. Once the victim's trust is gained, the perpetrator begins to employ emotional and psychological manipulation to strengthen the bond. Various tactics used include giving compliments, excessive attention, offering digital gifts, and sharing fabricated personal stories or secrets to create an emotional connection. When the victim

feels comfortable, the perpetrator gradually introduces sexual elements into the communication, such as requesting photos, initiating inappropriate video calls, or persuading the victim to keep their conversations secret. This approach traps the victim in a deviant relationship that is difficult for them to recognize as a form of abuse.

In many cases, grooming perpetrators also exploit digital threats or extortion (sex-tortion) when victims refuse or attempt to terminate communication. These threats often involve the dissemination of photos or private conversations that the perpetrators have previously collected. This psychological pressure causes victims to feel fearful and perceive no option but to comply with the perpetrator's demands. Grooming behavior against children severely harms victims psychologically, emotionally, and socially (Ika Yuniartiningtias, 2022). Such threats are particularly effective because they target the victim's feelings of shame and fear, especially when the child lacks awareness of their rights and available legal protections. This condition increases the child's vulnerability and social isolation. In the digital era, child grooming strategies also often involve the use of fake accounts, avatars, or fictitious identities that attract children's attention. Perpetrators may impersonate peers, young social media influencers, or popular fictional characters within their community.

The main findings of this study indicate that child grooming in the digital era exploits private communication through social media, which is difficult to monitor and highly effective in entrapping children. Perpetrators have also become increasingly sophisticated by using new technologies such as deepfake and artificial intelligence to falsify identities in order to gain the victim's trust. Emotional manipulation strategies are carried out systematically in several stages, ranging from friendly approaches to covert sexual threats or extortion. The novelty of this study lies in the detailed mapping of online interaction patterns and psychological tactics used by perpetrators, which have not been extensively examined in Indonesian literature. These findings reinforce the urgency of child protection policies and the development of digital literacy to better prepare children to recognize and face potential grooming crimes.

In several cases, advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence and deepfake are exploited to strengthen identity deception by perpetrators. Social media and digital platforms are increasingly misused as means for offenders to approach and exploit children through cyber grooming crimes (Nashwa Aulia Salsabila, 2025). Digital literacy is a crucial factor in recognizing and preventing such criminal practices from the outset. The ease of internet access, coupled with insufficient parental supervision, further increases the risk of child grooming. Many children use digital devices without supervision and lack an understanding of the ethics and dangers of online communication. Parents often remain unaware of their children's online activities or place too much trust in their children's ability to protect themselves. Meanwhile, grooming perpetrators are highly skilled at psychologically manipulating children and exploiting parental neglect. This underscores the vital role of families in monitoring and guiding children's use of technology.

To address the patterns and strategies of child grooming in the digital era, a comprehensive approach encompassing legal regulations, education, and technology is required. The government must strengthen specific regulations that explicitly criminalize digital grooming offenses. Education on digital literacy for children, parents, and educators should be expanded to enable early recognition of grooming signs. On the other hand, social media platforms must also enhance security systems and their capability to detect suspicious activities. Collaboration among various stakeholders is crucial in efforts to protect children from increasingly complex technology-based sexual crimes.

3.2 National Legal Regulations on Child Protection from Child Grooming

Child protection in Indonesia is generally regulated under Law No. 35 of 2014 on Child Protection, which is a revision of Law No. 23 of 2002. This law affirms the rights of children to be protected from all forms of violence, exploitation, and discrimination. However, the regulation does not contain specific provisions addressing the crime of child grooming. This crime often occurs covertly through digital media, making it diffi-

cult to identify and regulate under current laws. The lack of a specific definition results in suboptimal legal handling of grooming perpetrators.

In addition to the Child Protection Law, cases of child grooming also refer to the Information and Electronic Transactions Law (ITE Law) No. 11 of 2008, amended by Law No. 19 of 2016 (Rika Widianita, 2023). The ITE Law regulates the misuse of information technology, including the dissemination of obscene content and online sexual harassment. However, this regulation does not specifically address grooming actions that involve psychological techniques and manipulation. Furthermore, Indonesia currently lacks specific regulations explicitly governing child grooming (Andaru, 2021). This legal vacuum highlights the urgent need for revisions and additions to legal provisions capable of addressing grooming processes both preventively and repressively.

The Indonesian Criminal Code is also used as a basis for law enforcement against crimes affecting children. Child grooming, categorized as a relatively new crime, refers to actions that exploit the internet or other digital technologies to establish relationships with children for the purpose of facilitating non-contact (online) sexual interactions through psychological manipulation (Suendra & Mulyawati, 2020). Although the KUHP regulates sexual violence and harassment, its definitions remain traditional and primarily emphasize physical contact. Meanwhile, non-physical child grooming crimes employing psychological approaches are not specifically regulated. The latest KUHP, which began implementation in 2023, also does not include specific articles addressing grooming. Therefore, the current KUHP remains inadequate for optimally handling grooming perpetrators. The legal essence drawn from this situation is that Indonesia's criminal regulations have yet to fully address the evolving nature of modern sexual crimes, which are increasingly digital and psychological in character. Consequently, legal protection for children has yet to fully reflect the principle of the best interest of the child, as stipulated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Institutionally, the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (Komisi Perlindungan Anak Indonesia, KPAI) plays a vital role in monitoring and advocating for child protection. KPAI frequently issues policy recommendations to strengthen child protection in the digital realm. However, its authority is limited to supervisory and educational functions, without direct law enforcement powers. The responsibility for law enforcement remains with the police and prosecutors. Therefore, strengthening inter-agency collaboration through clearer regulations is necessary.

To enhance protection against child grooming practices, the government needs to undertake legal reforms by incorporating specific articles into the Child Protection Law and the Information and Electronic Transactions Law (ITE Law). These provisions should include clear definitions, mechanisms, and criminal sanctions related to digital grooming. This is essential to fulfill the principle of legality (*nullum crimen sine lege*), which requires that every criminal act be explicitly regulated by law to ensure legal certainty for both victims and perpetrators. Given the increasing incidence of child grooming, preventive measures leveraging technology to safeguard children are urgently needed (Azmi, 2025). Furthermore, it is also important to include provisions on education and digital literacy for children and parents as part of preventive efforts. Strong regulations will provide a clear legal basis for law enforcement officers to take firm action against offenders. In addition, enhancing public education will assist children in recognizing and reporting potential grooming behavior.

In addition to formal regulations, the government also needs to strengthen reporting mechanisms and victim protection through institutions such as the Witness and Victim Protection Agency (Lembaga Perlindungan Saksi dan Korban, LPSK). LPSK plays a role in providing protection and psychological recovery services for children who are victims of grooming. Integrated legal support and psychosocial services are crucial to reducing the traumatic impact experienced by victims. This aligns with provisions in the Child Protection Law that emphasize the importance of restoring the rights and welfare of child victims. Strengthening such institutions must be supported by adequate regulations and sufficient budget allocation to ensure optimal protection.

Facing the current inadequate legal framework, national regulations related to the protection of children from child grooming practices must be promptly reformed and adapted to technological advancements. The state holds responsibility for protecting Generation Z, who are particularly vulnerable to such digital crimes. Another essential legal principle is the integration of the *maslahah* (public interest) principle in Islamic law with the best interest of the child principle in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, serving as normative foundations prioritizing the safety and welfare of children. Integrating national regulations with Islamic legal principles and international standards is expected to strengthen the existing legal framework and create child protection policies that are more adaptive to the evolving modalities of technology-based crimes. Moreover, the active roles of families, schools, and communities must be optimized as the frontline in preventing and supervising children's online activities. Only through strong regulatory synergy, comprehensive legal understanding, and the involvement of all societal elements can legal protection efforts against digital grooming threats be effectively realized.

3.3 Concept of Legal Policy Reformulation for Child Protection from Grooming in Accordance with Islamic Law Principles and the Convention on the Rights of the Child

Child grooming, as a form of cyber sexual offense, is not yet explicitly regulated within Indonesia's national legal system. Currently, child protection is governed under Law No. 35 of 2014, an amendment to Law No. 23 of 2002 on Child Protection. While this law provides protection against various forms of violence, including sexual violence, Indonesia's criminal legal policy regarding the protection of sexual violence victims—particularly in preventing victimization—does not fully accommodate the non-physical and manipulative nature of child grooming. As a result, this aspect is not specifically addressed in the current legislation (Aprita, 2023), creating a legal gap in the handling of digital grooming cases.

The Electronic Information and Transactions Law (ITE Law) No. 11 of 2008, as amended by Law No. 19 of 2016, serves as a legal basis for addressing digital crimes. Although the law includes provisions on the dissemination of obscene content and violations of decency norms online, it does not specifically regulate child grooming. This type of crime is often difficult to uncover, as perpetrators typically employ psychological approaches without prior physical contact with the victim. Therefore, legal policy reform is needed to anticipate grooming processes from the earliest stages. Such reform should focus not only on repressive action but also emphasize preventive measures.

A key step in this legal reform is the inclusion of specific articles on child grooming in the Child Protection Law or the ITE Law. These provisions should define the key elements of grooming—such as intensive communication, emotional manipulation, and identity concealment by the perpetrator. In addition, strict criminal sanctions must be introduced to serve as a deterrent. Law enforcement must also be supported by digital forensic approaches to ensure that the collected evidence is valid and admissible, thereby strengthening the legal process in handling online grooming cases.

Beyond normative changes, the reformulation of legal policy must also include technical and preventive measures. The government should require digital platforms and social media companies to implement early detection systems and automatic reporting mechanisms related to grooming content. This approach, known as "child safety by design," prioritizes child protection from the system design phase. Furthermore, the empowerment of institutions such as the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI), the Witness and Victim Protection Agency (LPSK), and the Cybercrime Unit of the Indonesian National Police is essential. These institutions must be granted adequate authority and budgetary support to effectively carry out their duties.

Digital literacy and child online safety education must be systematically integrated into school curricula. This educational content should be grounded in Islamic values and the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) to ensure cultural and moral relevance within Indonesian society. Early digital literacy education equips children with the knowledge to recognize online threats and the capacity to protect them-

selves against grooming tactics. The government must also promote inter-agency collaboration between institutions such as the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (Kominfo), the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI), the police, and Islamic preaching organizations (dakwah bodies) to conduct grassroots-based awareness campaigns. This synergy will expand educational reach and enhance community-level monitoring and engagement.

From an Islamic legal perspective, the principles of *hifzh al-nafs* (protection of life) and *hifzh al-'irdh* (protection of dignity) form a strong moral foundation for child protection efforts. Islam also introduces the concept of *sadd al-dzari'ah* (blocking the means to harm), which encourages the prevention of any action that may lead to immoral or prohibited acts—including hidden forms of sexual exploitation. Although this principle is not explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an or Hadith, it remains highly relevant as a preventive approach against child grooming. Integrating such Islamic legal doctrines into national regulation would make legal policies more contextually appropriate and effective in an Indonesian society with a Muslim majority.

Moreover, legal reformulation must incorporate rehabilitative and restorative approaches. Islamic law embraces the principles of *ta'dib* (educational discipline) and *maslahah* (public interest), emphasizing restorative justice as a pathway to both accountability and healing. This approach not only protects the victims but also offers rehabilitation opportunities for perpetrators who are themselves minors. This framework ensures that legal enforcement goes beyond punishment and also fosters reformation and reintegration—strengthening the role of Islamic law as a just and humane legal system.

On a global scale, Indonesia has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child through Presidential Decree No. 36 of 1990. The Convention obligates state parties to protect children from all forms of exploitation, including those occurring via digital communication. Articles 19 and 34 of the CRC require states to take preventive measures against sexual violence and exploitation, including protection from manipulative practices such as grooming, which often takes place on social media platforms. Hence, CRC principles must be adapted and operationalized within Indonesia's national legal system.

As a concrete step, the state must ensure the provision of psychological and social recovery services for child grooming victims. These services should be community-based and incorporate religious values to ensure cultural acceptance and enhance their effectiveness. Timely and effective support will accelerate trauma recovery and prevent long-term psychological harm. Furthermore, restorative approaches should be extended to juvenile offenders, enabling their reintegration into society as healthy individuals. This is in line with the CRC's foundational principle of promoting the best interests of the child.

The novelty of this study lies in its comprehensive development of a legal reformulation model that integrates Islamic legal principles, national legislation, and international human rights norms as outlined in the CRC. This multidimensional model, encompassing preventive, repressive, educational, and rehabilitative elements in addressing child grooming, represents an underexplored perspective in Indonesian legal scholarship. The study contributes a conceptual framework that can guide the drafting of new legislation and the formulation of specific provisions on child grooming. In turn, this integrated legal approach ensures that future policies are technologically responsive, socially and religiously contextualized, and aligned with Indonesia's international obligations to protect children's rights.

4. Conclusions

Child grooming in the digital era has become increasingly complex and has not yet received adequate legal recognition in Indonesia's national regulations. A more preventive, comprehensive, and child-centered approach to protection can be found in both Islamic law and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Therefore, there is an urgent need to reformulate national legal policy to explicitly address child grooming, including its legal definition, constitutive elements, and applicable sanctions. The integration of

Islamic legal values with international standards will strengthen the national legal framework, making it more responsive to contemporary digital threats. Through this approach, legal protection for Generation Z against cyber-based crimes can be significantly enhanced.

5. Patents

This study recommends that the Indonesian government, in collaboration with the House of Representatives (DPR), draft a specific regulation clearly governing child grooming within the framework of the Child Protection Law. Such regulation must include a clear definition, criminal elements, stages of the offense, and firm sanctions for perpetrators operating in digital environments. Furthermore, the integration of Islamic legal principles and the norms of the Convention on the Rights of the Child is essential to ensure that the legal policy reflects both national cultural values and international standards. The government is also encouraged to enhance digital literacy among children, parents, and educators as a preventive measure. Finally, the capacity of law enforcement officials and child protection institutions must be strengthened to ensure that case handling is conducted professionally and with a victim-centered approach.

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