



Juridical Analysis of Child Grooming and Identify Forgery (Faker) In The Roleplayer Community On Social Media

Jasmine Fatiha Jamaila^{1*}, Yuliana Yuli Wahyuningsih²

¹Universitas Pembangunan Nasional Veteran Jakarta, Jakarta, Indonesia, jasmineftha@gmail.com.

²Universitas Pembangunan Nasional Veteran Jakarta, Jakarta, Indonesia, yuli@upnvj.ac.id.

*Corresponding Author: jasmineftha@gmail.com

Abstract: This study examines the modus operandi of child grooming that utilizes identity forgery (faker) in the online roleplayer (RP) community, as well as analyzes legal protection and psychological impact on victims. Using a normative juridical approach, the study found that perpetrators systematically build an emotional relationship with child victims through false identities for the purpose of exploitation. This faker practice has been shown to cause deep psychological trauma and mental destruction. Juridically, this action can be charged through Article 378 of the Criminal Code concerning fraud, the Child Protection Law, and the ITE Law. The results of the study confirm the importance of digital literacy, parental supervision, and ongoing psychological support for victims. We suggest the need for more protective platform policies and legal adaptations that are responsive to these cybercrimes.

Keyword: Child grooming, identity forgery, roleplayer, child protection, cyber law.

INTRODUCTION

In the middle of the internet penetration in Indonesia, social media has become an integral part of modern life, offering a platform to interact, share information, and form online communities. Its rapid development presents various opportunities, but also challenges and potential risks, including in the context of interactions between individuals. Social media allows individuals to connect with people from different backgrounds, geographic locations, and similar interests (Wulansari et al, 2024). This opens the door to new friendships, collaboration, and the formation of a strong online community. Platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok have become popular spaces for teenagers and children to seek entertainment, social relationships, and self-existence. However, this freedom also presents potential risks, especially when used without sufficient oversight and understanding of digital security.

The algorithms and content circulating on social media platforms are not always filtered according to the age of the user. Teens and children are potentially exposed to content that contains violence, pornography, hate speech, or the promotion of other risky behaviors. Also, the ease of interacting with anyone on online platforms opens up opportunities for adults with bad intentions to approach and manipulate children and adolescents (grooming). One of the

interesting phenomena that thrives on the platform is the roleplayer community, where individuals create and act fictional characters, building interactions and narratives in virtual worlds (Diaz, 2024).

A roleplayer community (RP) is an online community where users play the role of fictional figures or public figures, using identities that are not their own (Priambodo, 2022). The phenomenon of roleplayers on social media is driven by the desire to seek entertainment, fun, and affection that may be under-fulfilled in the real world (Putri et al, 2024). Players often use the identities of fictional characters or public figures (pretending to be someone else) to get friends, family, or partners. This motivation gives them space to express themselves more freely without the limitations of their original identity. The following is an example of supporting documents that will be presented.



Figure 1. Illustrates the interactions within the Roleplayer (RP) community where participants act out the roles of 'idols.'



Figure 2 highlights serious cases occurring in the same environment, such as online sexual harassment and even pedophilia cases.

Although its essence is creativity and entertainment, the anonymous and hidden nature behind these characters opens up potential abuse, including the practice of identity faking. This act of using false identities can make it difficult to verify age and real identity, creating a dangerous loophole, especially for vulnerable groups such as children. Not infrequently, fakers are also done just for fun and create interesting fictitious narratives. Some individuals may use fake identities to protect their personal privacy, especially if they are active in sensitive or controversial roles (Ratri, 2020). However, behind these reasons, the practice of identity forgery in the RP community holds very dangerous potential risks, especially related to child grooming.

Child grooming is a manipulative process carried out by adults to build an emotional relationship with children or adolescents, with the aim of exploiting them sexually by involving psychological manipulation aimed at making the child feel comfortable and attached to the perpetrator, making them more easily exploited (Saleh, 2023). This process often involves manipulation, seduction, and exploitation of the child's beliefs (Amilda et al, 2025). Social media and online communities, including role-players, can be a medium for child groomers to approach and build relationships with children in a covert way. Fictional characters and anonymity can be used by perpetrators to hide their true identities and manipulate victims without detection. The lack of supervision and digital literacy makes them vulnerable to becoming victims. Therefore, special supervision and protection are needed for parents to supervise their minor children by limiting their social media.

Children or teens who **are lonely, lack attention, or have problems at home/school** become more susceptible to seeking outside connections and validation. Groomers often exploit these emotional needs by providing attention, **support, and false understanding** (DP3AP2KB, 2025). The perpetrator uses a false identity to build trust and emotional closeness with the child or adolescent in the world of RP in a gradual and manipulative manner, with the aim of sexually exploiting them. Victims who have low self-esteem are more easily influenced through praise or attention, so they are more likely to receive treatment that is detrimental to them.

Groomers often have high manipulation skills and are experts in building the victim's trust gradually. They are good at reading emotions and taking advantage of victims' vulnerabilities. Some perpetrators have an understanding of child psychology and know how to influence and manipulate children's thoughts and emotions (UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2024). Perpetrators often feel powerful and have control over the children they groom (Lase et al, 2022). Manipulating and controlling the victim can provide a sense of superiority and the fulfillment of the need for dominance. The perpetrator may have fantasies and sexual obsessions with children, and grooming is a way to bring those fantasies to life in the real world.

Although it sounds ironic, some perpetrators may also seek validation and acceptance from the victim. In the interactions they build, especially in the early stages of grooming, they can get a sense of need or appreciation by the child. However, this validation is distorted and built on the basis of manipulation. They may feel accepted and cared for by the victim, especially if the victim is a vulnerable and attention-seeking child. Many child groomers have personality disorders, such as narcissism or antisocialism, or other psychological conditions underlying their deviant behavior (Andaru, 2021). The perpetrator's need for self-validation cannot justify the act of child grooming at all, because the essence of the crime is the sexual exploitation of children. We must focus fully on victim protection and strict law enforcement, given how easily children's innocence and trust are exploited by predators. They may not be suspicious of the goodwill shown by adults, especially if the perpetrator is friendly and reassuring. Interactions in RP often involve character building and deep relationships, creating an intimate and emotional environment where the perpetrator can take advantage of the victim's vulnerability.

The perpetrator not only abuses the child's trust, but also causes serious psychological impacts. When the perpetrator hides behind a false identity, the victim who is already emotionally attached will feel betrayal and deep deception. These feelings can develop into trauma, anxiety, and a loss of trust in others. For children whose emotions are still developing, grooming experiences like this can damage their sense of security, self-esteem, and self-concept, leaving long-term wounds that need special assistance for them to recover.

Juridically, child grooming is a serious criminal offense that requires special attention in law enforcement, especially in the context of the online environment (Fahreza, 2024). The crime of child grooming in Indonesia has been legally recognized through Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection. This law is the basis for cracking down on grooming perpetrators and providing protection for children from sexual exploitation. However, law enforcement against child grooming still faces various obstacles (Novitasari, 2021). One of the main challenges is the lack of public understanding of the characteristics of grooming and how to protect children from these threats (Yogo et al, 2024). Cybercrimes such as child grooming are often overlooked in the legal system because they have shifted to the online space. Digital anonymity, especially in the roleplayer (RP) community, allows perpetrators to manipulate and exploit children emotionally, psychologically, or sexually. This phenomenon demands that the law must be more adaptive and responsive to crime in the digital space in order to provide real protection for children as a vulnerable group

It is important to raise **awareness** of the dangers of faker (identity forgery) in the roleplayer (RP) community because it is a key tool in **child grooming**. What looks like a game to some people, is actually a dangerous weapon for online predators. To protect children, we need **strict parental supervision**, adequate **digital safety education**, and **stronger platform policies**. According to legal theory, rules should be able to **adapt quickly** to technology so that the law really functions as a social engineering tool to create order and protection, especially for vulnerable groups.

Based on this background, this study identifies two main problems. First, this study will describe the modus operandi of child grooming crimes committed by faking identities (faker) in the roleplayer community. Second, this study will analyze the forms of legal protection available as well as the psychological impact experienced by victims.

METHOD

Types and Approaches to Research

This research uses a **normative juridical** method, which is legal research conducted by examining applicable positive legal norms, legal principles, and legal doctrines relevant to the problem. This approach aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of the application of the rule of law and its relation to the case or issue being studied (Christiawan, 2023).

The normative juridical approach is carried out by examining the following:

- **The Criminal Code (Criminal Code and New Criminal Code)**, especially **Article 378 of the Criminal Code concerning Fraud**.
- **Law Number 35 of 2014 jo. Law Number 23 of 2002** concerning Child Protection, as well as **Law Number 17 of 2016**.
- **Law Number 19 of 2016** concerning Amendments to **Law Number 11 of 2008** concerning Information and Electronic Transactions (ITE), which regulates unlawful acts in the digital space, including identity abuse.
- **Law Number 39 of 1999** concerning Human Rights (*HAM*).
- Other related regulations, as well as,
- Legal literature and other juridical documents.

Although this research is based on a normative approach, the author also adds interviews with relevant sources as the main tool to support the research. Interviews were used to obtain practical perspectives and empirical images of the application of legal norms in the field. Thus, the results of the research are not only theoretical, but also supported by factual data from parties who are directly related to the problem. The combination of literature studies and interviews is expected to produce a more in-depth, objective, and relevant legal analysis to the existing reality.

Respondent Inclusion Criteria

In order for the data collected to be relevant and in accordance with the focus of the research, the researcher established the following inclusion criteria:

- a. Respondents are individuals who are still under the age of majority according to the provisions of laws and regulations (under 18 years old) or have been at that age when experiencing a case.
- b. Have been or have been active in the *roleplayer* community on social media for at least the last 3 months.
- c. Have experienced or witnessed firsthand the practice of faker, *child grooming*, or identity fraud in the RP community.
- d. Willing to give information and participate in interviews voluntarily.

Data Collection Techniques

- a. **Primary data** was obtained through online interviews (via Zoom) with 3 respondents who were selected purposively through a search on social media.
- b. **Secondary data** is obtained through literature studies, studies of laws and regulations, legal documents, and the results of previous research relevant to this research topic.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data that has been collected is analyzed qualitatively. The analysis is carried out by:

- a. Reduce the data from interviews and literature to important points relevant to the focus of the research.
- b. Grouping data based on themes, namely legal, social, and psychological impact on victims.
- c. Compare empirical data from interviews with applicable legal provisions (normative analysis), to see the gap between norms and practices in the field.
- d. Compile the results of the analysis in the form of a systematic narrative description as material for research discussion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Results

Table 1. Presentation of Interview Results

No	Respondent	Brief Identity	Focus of Interview	Key Findings
1	R1 (Victim)	AR, 17 years old	Experience as a victim of Child Grooming in RP	Initially felt understood and comfortable with the perpetrator, who appeared older and supportive. After years, discovered the perpetrator's identity was fake. Felt deceived, suffered trauma, and experienced mental distress due to repeated lies.
2	R2 (Witness)	NA, 21 years old	Observation of Grooming and Faker phenomenon in RP	Frequently witnessed perpetrators manipulating minors, as they are considered easily influenced. Perpetrators often use attention and fake identities to gain trust. Many RP players also lie about their age and identity, some of which lead to Child Grooming.
3	R3 (Perpetrator)	FR, 23 years old	Motivation and process of committing Child Grooming	Admitted it started as a prank in RP, but continued lying due to lack of confidence. Felt satisfaction when the victim trusted him fully. Later realized the act was wrong, as it exploited a minor who was vulnerable. Expressed regret for his actions.

Source: Research data

This study offers a clear and holistic understanding of **child grooming** and the **faker** phenomenon in the online Roleplayer (RP) community through the perspectives of a victim (**R1**), a community witness (**R2**), and the perpetrator (**R3**). The victim's experience (**R1**) revealed profound vulnerability, confirming that the abuse follows a systematic pattern—where the perpetrator intentionally builds deep emotional trust and a strong bond before exploiting the minor, consistent with Donna M. Hughes's grooming theory. This betrayal leaves the victim with severe, lasting psychological scars, including disorientation and a loss of fundamental trust. This trauma is further framed by the witness (**R2**), who clarifies that such behaviors are not isolated incidents but a systemic problem rooted in the predators' assumption

that minors are "easy to manipulate," highlighting the urgent need for collective community education.

The perpetrator's confession (**R3**) provides critical internal insight: the initial "prank" quickly escalated into a deep psychological **need for self-validation and ego gratification**, echoing the concept of *narcissistic supply*. The perpetrator's relief that the victim was unsuspecting directly correlates with his low self-confidence and the gap between his true and false identities. Legally, the complex actions against the minor (**R1**) constitute severe unlawful acts, prosecutable under a combination of statutes: the **Criminal Code (Article 378)** for using the false identity (*faker*) to gain emotional control, the **Child Protection Law** for psychological violence and exploitation, and the **ITE Law** for misuse of identity in the digital space. Although the existing legal framework is robust enough to prosecute this crime, the study concludes that the **biggest challenge remains the difficulty of obtaining sufficient evidence** for proof in the digital realm.

Discussion

Child Grooming and Identity Forgery in the Roleplayer Community

The digital world, which is supposed to be a safe space for interaction, holds serious risks for children and adolescents, especially the crime of child grooming. Systematic behaviors aimed at building close relationships for these exploits often take advantage of anonymity and false identities (*faker*) on the internet. The dangers of grooming have become more undetectable, especially in roleplay (RP) communities where fictional characters are commonly used. In the context of RP, perpetrators deliberately use community habits—hiding behind false identities, manipulated ages, and attractive characters—as their main weapon, according to Donna M. Hughes' grooming theory, to build strong emotional bonds before committing exploitation. In the digital space, this manipulative process is much easier to do, allowing the perpetrator to blur the trail and avoid parental supervision, so that child grooming in cyberspace becomes a complex social problem.

The combination of **child grooming** and **faker** in the roleplay (RP) community creates a big challenge in protecting children. Although these crimes do not necessarily involve physical contact, the psychological impacts such as mental breakdown, deception, and trauma—are severe. Perpetrators use identity forgery to build an ideal figure and manipulate the victim. This cunning *modus operandi* shows a predatory understanding of victim psychology and the dynamics of online communities. Therefore, **adequate digital awareness and literacy** must be the main bulwark of defense to prevent such harmful practices (Salamor et al, 2020).

The findings of this study involving R1, R2, and R3 clearly show how the practice of child grooming and identity forgery (*faker*) really occurs in the field. The confession from R1, the victim, revealed in detail the stages of grooming which were very systematic. The perpetrator (R3) starts by building a strong emotional bond, making the victim feel "**understood**", and eventually traps the victim into a relationship full of lies. This bitter experience led to **mental breakdown and deep trauma** for R1, proving that the impact of psychological violence from grooming is just as dangerous as physical violence. Therefore, this case at the same time confirms that identity fraud is not trivial; rather, it is the key element that smooths out this evil.

R2's view as a witness really gives a broader picture of our findings. Her statement that "things like this often happen" indicates that the case of child grooming in the roleplay (RP) community is not a momentary event, but an ingrained problem, aka systemic. This view further reinforces the fact that groomers often act on the assumption that minors are easily manipulated to satisfy their egos. R2's statement also revealed that the use of false identities in the RP community is not always neutral; For some individuals, this is actually a tool to abuse

power. This all shows how crucial the role of the community itself is in creating a safe environment, rather than allowing or even facilitating crime.

Furthermore, the confession of R3 (the perpetrator) provides a very crucial understanding of the hidden motive behind this crime. R3 explained that all his actions started from a lack of confidence and a great desire to gain validation and power in cyberspace. This motif complements the findings of R1 and R2 which focus more on the visible impact and the phenomenon that occurs. In other words, the case of child grooming in the RP community is **not only about exploitation**, but also about how individuals who have psychological problems take advantage of loopholes in the online world to satisfy their egos. Therefore, this analysis shows that to eradicate child grooming, our approach must be more than just law enforcement; we need to involve education, psychological support, as well as a deeper understanding of social dynamics in the digital space (Wahyuni & Fauzia, 2024).

Legal Protection and Psychological Impact on Childgrooming Victims

Legal protection of children is the main pillar of the legal system in Indonesia, which is deliberately designed to protect the rights and welfare of children from various threats. Laws such as the **Child Protection Law** (including recent revisions such as Law No. 35/2014 and Law No. 17/2016) and the **ITE Law** (Law No. 19/2016) clearly provide a legal basis to ensnare child offenders, even in the digital space (Junaidi, 2021). This legal framework not only focuses on physical violence, but also protects children from exploitation, inhuman treatment, and psychological violence. The presence of these various regulations shows the state's serious commitment to make the law a tool of social engineering that can adapt along with the dynamics of crime in the digital era.

The psychological impact of child grooming on minors is very complex and can leave a mark for many years, even into adulthood. Many victims suffer from deep trauma that triggers Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (**PTSD**). (Aryuni, 2023). This can be characterized by flashbacks, disturbing nightmares, and intense fear whenever they recall the grooming experience. In addition, victims often experience **depression**—feeling empty, losing interest in daily activities, and even having a desire to hurt themselves. They are also often haunted by **guilt and shame** because they feel "playing a role" in the relationship, when in fact they are the parties who are completely manipulated. Not infrequently, victims begin to withdraw from the social environment because they lose trust in others, especially in adults, which of course hinders their social and emotional development. Especially in the case of the roleplayer (RP) community, the impact can be much heavier. Victims have previously built a deep emotional attachment to the perpetrator, and when that false identity is revealed, the feeling of being cheated by someone they trust will exacerbate the trauma, bring down self-esteem, and significantly damage their self-concept.

The findings show that child **grooming** cases in the roleplay (RP) community are very complex. Legally, the actions of perpetrators who use **false identities (faker)** can be charged with **Article 378 of the Criminal Code** because of the element of fraud, even though the motive is to gain emotional gain, validation, and a sense of power (psychological fraud), not material losses. Furthermore, because the victim is a minor, this act automatically violates the **Child Protection Act** which prohibits psychological exploitation and violence.

The actions of the perpetrators are also clearly **in violation of the ITE Law** because they misuse their identities and electronic information. The use of false identities to manipulate victims is a real offense that only strengthens the legal basis for prosecuting them. The combination of the Criminal Code, the Child Protection Law, and the ITE Law has actually provided a very strong legal framework to ensnare child grooming perpetrators in the digital world (Dewi 2025). Even so, the biggest challenge remains the evidentiary process. Therefore, more proactive law enforcement is needed, as well as close cooperation between law

enforcement officials and platform providers so that perpetrators can be tracked and victims get justice.

The psychological impact experienced by the victim (R1) is very significant, in line with the theory of victim psychology. Victims experience "mental devastation" and "trauma that leaves a mark" as a result of **a deep betrayal of trust** that is systematically built by the perpetrator, not just physical abuse. This hidden but destructive emotional trauma suggests that the victim needs **immediate and ongoing psychological intervention**. Therefore, in addition to legal protection, this study highlights the crucial need for **mental support services** for victims to fully recover.

CONCLUSION

This research really opened our eyes that *child grooming* in the *roleplay* (RP) community has a very cunning modus operandi, where identity forgery (*faker*) is used as the main weapon to manipulate child victims. The most important finding—which we wouldn't know without this study is how perpetrators take advantage of victims' psychological gaps, such as a sense of need for validation and a sense of security, to seamlessly carry out their actions. The study has proven that the psychological wounds of deception and emotional betrayal can be just as dangerous, even deeper, than physical abuse. The combination of Donna M. Hughes' grooming theory and legal analysis that combines the Criminal Code, the Child Protection Law, and the ITE Law, has proven to be very effective in answering this problem, which is to thoroughly analyze the mode of operation as well as analyze the relevant legal framework.

Although it has provided meaningful insights, this study certainly has limitations, especially because of the small number of respondents. This makes our findings not yet representative of *the phenomenon of child grooming* in the *roleplay* (RP) community more broadly. This shortcoming also prevents us from analyzing in depth how the social dynamics within the RP community can facilitate this kind of criminal practice. Therefore, for further research, we recommend that large-scale surveys and more in-depth interviews be conducted involving more perpetrators, victims, and members of the RP community. Future studies also need to explore the role of social media platforms and their algorithms in creating an environment that is vulnerable to *child grooming*, as well as formulate more tangible policy recommendations to improve digital literacy and parental supervision.

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