



Handling The Crime of Manipulating Children's Photos That Violate The Morality of Studies at The Cirebon City Police

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Abstract

Background. The development of information technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI) has given rise to various forms of cybercrime, one of which is the criminal act of manipulating indecent images of children.

Aims. This study aims to identify the modus operandi and the handling of criminal acts involving the manipulation of indecent images of children by the police. The research method employed is normative legal research using statutory, conceptual, and case approaches. The data were obtained through a literature review supported by interview results and case documents as supplementary analytical materials.

Result. The findings indicate that the modus operandi involves obtaining victims' photographs through social media or other digital platforms, which are then manipulated using Artificial Intelligence-based applications to produce indecent content. Such actions constitute a form of cybercrime that violates moral norms and may be categorized as digital pornography. The handling of these cases by the police includes receiving reports, collecting evidence, examining witnesses, and coordinating with information technology experts. Nevertheless, the handling process continues to face obstacles, including limited human resources in the field of digital forensics and inadequate supporting facilities.

Conclusion. Juridically, the handling of these cases has referred to Law Number 1 of 2024 concerning Electronic Information and Transactions, Law Number 44 of 2008 concerning Pornography, and Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection.

Keywords: Child Indecent Image Manipulation, Cybercrime, Artificial Intelligence, Digital Pornography, Law Enforcement.



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INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of information and communication technology in the digital era has brought major changes in the order of life in modern society. However, in addition to the convenience it offers, this progress also opens up opportunities for the development of new and increasingly diverse forms of crime, commonly referred to as cybercrime (*Cybercrime*). Nowadays, cybercrime is not limited to data theft or financial loss but has also penetrated the realm of moral crimes through electronic devices that facilitate unlawful acts. This is reflected in the increasing circulation of indecent content, both in the form of writings, images, and videos that are illegally distributed to the public, which basically shows an increased risk of exploitation against vulnerable groups, especially children¹.

Children are the most at-risk group in the digital world, given their limited understanding of the dangers in cyberspace, as well as low digital awareness and lack of adult supervision². This condition is further exacerbated by the emergence of new crime modes that utilize artificial intelligence technology (*Artificial Intelligence*). Currently, criminals are able to manipulate or alter photos with the content of children's morality with technology such as *Deepfake* to create visual content that looks real so that it is difficult to recognize as an engineering product. Although the content is synthetic, legally and psychologically, this act is still classified as a form of digital-based child sexual exploitation that has a heavy impact on the growth and development of the victim's soul and social life³.

How serious this threat is is reflected in data in the area around Cirebon, where the number of victims of sexual violence against women and children is still at an alarming level, namely 110 victims in 2023 and 99 victims in 2024 (SIMFONI PPA Cirebon Regency, 2024)⁴.

¹ Revindo Arenda Sitepu, Mohammad Eka Putra, and Fajar Khaify Rizky, "Legal Regulation of Cybercrime Against Morality Through Electronic Media (Study of Decision Number: 1136/Pid.Sus/2021/PN. PBR)," *Journal Of Science and Social Research*, 7.3 (2024); Gina Salsabila Putri et al., "Implementation of Protection for Child Victims in The Criminal Justice Process," *Journal of Community Services (Abdisci)*, 2.8 (2025), p. 382–90.

² Yohana Kristina Nima et al., "Cyber Crime and Digital Security of Elementary School Children: A Criminological Perspective in Early Prevention in Elementary Education Settings," *Pendas : Scientific Journal of Basic Education*, 10.4 (2025), p. 258–70.

³ Nadya Tasya Putu Putri and Agung Ayu Anak Ngurah Rusmini Tini Gorda, "Legal Arrangements in Countering Deepfake Artificial Intelligence (AI) to Children as Victims of Cybercrime in Indonesia," *Udayana Master Law Journal*, 14.3 (2025), p. 713–28, doi:10.24843/jmhu.2025.v14.i03.p09.

⁴ Siska Karina et al., "Implementation of Legal Protection Policies for Victims of Violence Against Women and Children," *Journal of Community Services (Abdisci)*, 2.7 (2025), p. 303–17, doi:10.62885/abdisci.v2i7.676; Waluyadi Waluyadi et al., "Cirebon Regional Government Policy To Protect Child Victims Of Sexual Violence," *Legal Arena*, 17.1 (2024), p. 95–111, doi:10.21776/ub.arenahukum.2024.01701.6.

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In responding to this phenomenon, institutions such as the Regional Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAID) of Cirebon Regency play a vital role through the function of supervision, protection, and assistance to children who are entangled in cases of sexual violence to ensure the fulfillment of their basic rights is fulfilled⁵. Digital communication through conversation features and social media is often used as a means by perpetrators to take a manipulative approach (*Online Grooming*) slowly towards children until it finally leads to digital exploitation⁶. This situation demands a more adaptive law enforcement approach, given that current regulations are unable to fully keep pace with the evolving modus operandi of cybercrime⁷.

In Indonesia's positive legal framework, although the dissemination of moral content has been regulated through the Electronic Information and Transaction Law⁸ There is still a problem in the form of a void of norms (*right vacuum*), specifically regarding the explicit criminalization of artificial intelligence-based (AI)-based engineered content in child sexual crimes. This makes it difficult for law enforcers to determine the right crime formulation to ensnare the perpetrators, specifically⁹. In addition to regulatory barriers, the law enforcement process also faces technical constraints in digital forensics as well as structural barriers, such as limited safe house facilities (*Safe House*) and lack of trained psychologists to deal with the trauma of sexual violence¹⁰.

Furthermore, the handling of the case became more complex when it was known that the perpetrators of the crime were also minors. In these conditions, law enforcement officials

⁵ Sinthya Lustiana et al., "Cirebon Regency's National Commission for Child Protection's role in handling sexual violence against children," *Interdisciplinary Social Studies*, 3.3 (2024), p. 130–34, doi:10.55324/iss.v3i3.672.

⁶ Rayhan Rizky Ramawan and Muhammad Zaky, "Analysis of Cyber Crime (Cyber Child Grooming) in Roblox Online Games," *INNOVATIVE: Journal Of Social Science Research*, 5.4 (2025), p. 1656–69.

⁷ Mellyuana Amanda and Rai Putu Ni Yuliartini, "Cyberporn as a Form of Cybercrime: A Criminological Analysis of the Spread of Pornographic Content in the Digital Space," *Al-Zayn: Journal of Social Sciences & Law*, 4.1 (2026), p. 4784–91.

⁸ Arenda Sitepu, Eka Putra, and Khaify Rizky, "Legal Regulation of Cybercrime on Morality Through Electronic Media (Study of Decision Number: 1136/Pid.Sus/2021/PN. PBR)."

⁹ Nadya Tasya Putu Putri and Agung Ayu Anak Ngurah Rusmini Tini Gorda, "Legal Arrangements in Countering Deepfake Artificial Intelligence (AI) against Children as Victims of Cybercrime in Indonesia"; Sanusi Sanusi et al., "Juridical Review Of Granting The Right Of Restitution As A Form Implementation Of Diversion Against Criminal Offenses Theft In Child Criminal Cases," *Asian Journal Of Engineering, Social And Health*, 2.12 (2023), p. 1612–22.

¹⁰ Karina et al., "Implementation of Legal Protection Policies for Victims of Violence Against Women and Children"; Maretha Intan Cahyani et al., "Implementation of Legal Protection (Study of Decision Number: 5/Pid.Sus/2024/PN.Kng) for Children Who Are Sexually Abused," *Journal of Law Sciences (Legisci)*, 1.6 (2024), p. 249–58, doi:10.62885/legisci.v1i6.310; Aulia Rahmawati et al., "The Neurolaw Perspective on Criminal Responsibility of Children in Indonesia," *Indonesian Scientific Journal*, 10.5 (2025), p. 4841–49, doi:10.36418/syntax-literat.v10i5.59359.

are required to balance the protection of victims and the fulfillment of children's rights as perpetrators through a restorative justice approach and diversion mechanisms as regulated in the Juvenile Criminal Justice System¹¹. However, victim protection remains a top priority through the role of institutions such as the Regional Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAID) of Cirebon Regency, which carries out the function of supervision and assistance to ensure the fulfillment of restitution rights and psychological recovery of victims¹².

Given the strong social stigma and complexity of digital proof at the regional level, the role of the police, especially the Cirebon City Police, is very important. The investigation and investigation process is not only required to be oriented towards formal law enforcement, but also on the protection of children's rights as a whole. On that basis, this study aims to examine in depth the modus operandi and the mechanism for handling the crime of manipulating children's photos that violate morality at the Cirebon City Police. This study is expected to be able to produce conformity of practices in the field with applicable regulations, as well as contribute to the development of criminal law, especially in responding to the dynamics of cybercrime based on artificial intelligence technology.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Law Enforcement Theory

Law enforcement is a series of processes carried out by the state through law enforcement agencies to realize legal certainty, public order, and human rights protection. Criminal law enforcement includes various stages, ranging from investigation, investigation, prosecution, examination in court, to the implementation of the verdict. Ideally, law enforcement aims to uphold the truth, provide a deterrent effect to the perpetrators of criminal acts, and realize justice for victims and the wider community. In academic studies, law enforcement is interpreted as a systematic effort by the state to ensure that the applicable legal norms are implemented fairly and consistently by all parties¹³.

¹¹ Ismayan Ismayan Et Al., "Implementation Of Regional Regulation Number 2 Of 2021 Concerning The Implementation Of The Protection Of Women And Children," *Hermeneutics : Journal Of Law*, 8.1 (2024), P. 60–69, Doi:10.33603/6zxcnk35; Lustiana Et Al., "Cirebon Regency's National Commission For Child Protection's Role In Handling Sexual Violence Against Children"; Sanusi Et Al., "Juridical Review Of Granting The Right Of Restitution As A Form Implementation Of Diversion Against Criminal Offenses Theft In Child Criminal Cases."

¹² Lustiana et al., "Cirebon Regency's National Commission for Child Protection's role in handling sexual violence against children."

¹³ Vivi Ariyanti, "Law Enforcement Policy in the Indonesian Criminal Justice System," *Juridical Journal*, 6.2 (2019), p. 33–54.

The criminal law enforcement process in the Indonesian judicial system is regulated mainly through Law Number 20 of 2025 concerning the Criminal Procedure Code (KUHAP). The Criminal Code is the basis for law enforcement officials such as investigators, public prosecutors, and judges in carrying out legal actions ranging from arrest, detention, investigation, to examination at trial. In practice, the efficiency and professionalism of law enforcement is highly dependent on the authorities' understanding of the provisions of the Criminal Code, including the principle of presumption of innocence and the rights of suspects during the legal process, so that law enforcement can run fairly and in accordance with human rights principles¹⁴.

One of the important dimensions in law enforcement is the role of the authorities in the implementation of coercive efforts, such as arrests and confiscations. These forced efforts must be carried out based on legal provisions while still upholding human rights and dignity. Normative research also shows that in practice, there are often challenges in the implementation of coercive measures, such as the lack of understanding of the principles of procedural law and the protection of suspects' rights, which have the potential to cause violations of individual human rights if not implemented correctly¹⁵.

In the modern context, law enforcement requires not only the application of written rules but also the integration of legal theory, professional apparatus, and adjustments to technological developments and new crime modus operandi. This is important because of the complexity *Cybercrime* Including the crime of manipulating children's photos requires an adaptive law enforcement approach and collaboration between law enforcement agencies to ensure an effective and fair legal process for all parties involved.

Cybercrime Theory

Cybercrime (*Cybercrime*) is a form of contemporary crime that utilizes information and communication technology, especially the internet, as its main medium. In its development, *Cybercrime* encompasses not only conventional crimes that migrate to the digital realm, such as fraud and data theft, but also new forms of crime previously unknown in the traditional legal system. The characteristic of this crime lies in its nature that goes beyond the boundaries of the

¹⁴ M. Rochman, Wirachman Wirachman, and Adepio Ilham, M, "Law Enforcement in the Criminal Justice System According to the Criminal Procedure Code and the Criminal Procedure Code Bill in Indonesia," *Kutei Scientific Journal*, 24.1 (2025), p. 1–21, doi:10.33369/jik.v25i1.41431.

¹⁵ Asep Suherman, "Arrest As A Form Of Forced Law Enforcement In The Criminal Justice System In Indonesia," *Rule of Law*, 29.1 (2020), p. 29–45, doi:10.35586/jjur.v6i2.789.

territory (*borderless*), anonymous, and has a wide and fast spread, thus posing its own challenges for law enforcement officials. The rapid development of digital technology has also complicated this situation, both in terms of the *modus operandi* and the techniques used by perpetrators, which has implications for the difficulty of proof, the tracing of the perpetrator's identity, and the determination of the applicable legal jurisdiction. Therefore, an adaptive legal approach and increased capacity of the apparatus in understanding technological dynamics are needed so that cybercrime prevention can be carried out effectively¹⁶.

In line with these needs, the Indonesian legal system has anticipated this development through Law Number 11 of 2008 concerning Information and Electronic Transactions, which has been updated through Law Number 19 of 2016 and Law Number 1 of 2024. One of the important provisions in this regulation is Article 27 paragraph (1), which expressly prohibits everyone from deliberately and without rights to distribute, transmit, or make accessible information or electronic documents that contain moral violations. Thus, the complexity of the characteristics *Cybercrime* As a modern crime, it requires a thorough understanding of the law, especially in analyzing specific cases such as the manipulation of photos of children that violate morality through digital media as the focus of this research.

Pornography Theory

Pornography is any form of images, writings, sounds, animations, conversations, gestures, and other forms of messages that contain obscenity or sexual exploitation that is contrary to moral norms in society. From a criminal law perspective, pornography is seen as an act that can damage public morality and threaten the values of decency protected by law. Along with the development of information technology, forms of pornography are no longer limited to conventional print or audiovisual media, but are also developing in digital forms that can be disseminated through the internet and social media with a very wide reach. Therefore, pornography is a form of crime that requires special legal arrangements to provide protection to the public, especially vulnerable groups such as children¹⁷.

In the Indonesian legal system, the regulation of pornography is specifically regulated through Law Number 44 of 2008 concerning Pornography. Article 1 number 1 of the Law defines

¹⁶ Bunga Anggreini, "Strengthening Indonesian Criminal Law in Facing Cybercrime in the Digital Era," *Recorded Journal Tracks*, 3.3 (2025), p. 8–20.

¹⁷ Olivia Novera and Yenny Fitri.Z, "Analysis of Criminal Law Arrangements for the Abuse of Image Manipulation Technology (Deepfake) in the Dissemination of Pornographic Content Through Social Media Accounts," *El-Faqih : Journal of Islamic Thought and Law*, 10.2 (2024), p. 460–74, doi:10.58401/faqih.v10i2.1539.

pornography as images, sketches, illustrations, photographs, writings, sounds, sounds, moving images, animations, conversations, gestures, or other forms of messages through various forms of communication media and/or public performances that contain obscenity or sexual exploitation that violates moral norms in society. Furthermore, Article 4 paragraph (1) of the Pornography Law prohibits everyone from producing, making, reproducing, duplicating, disseminating, broadcasting, importing, exporting, offering, selling, renting, or providing pornography. This provision shows that Indonesian law prohibits not only the dissemination of pornography, but also the entire range of activities related to its creation and distribution¹⁸.

The development of artificial intelligence technology (Artificial Intelligence) and deepfake technology poses new challenges in dealing with pornography. AI-based photo manipulation allows a person to create pornographic content that looks authentic even though it never happened in reality. This phenomenon is known as deepfake pornography and has become one of the fastest-growing forms of cybercrime. If the object being manipulated is a child, then the act not only meets the elements of pornography, but can also be categorized as a form of sexual exploitation of children that causes psychological, social, and reputational losses for the victim. Therefore, the theory of pornography is relevant in this study to analyze the crime of manipulating children's moral photos as a form of digital pornography carried out through information technology means¹⁹.

Theory In Criminal Law: Morality in Criminal Law

Morality is closely related to the norms of decency, ethics, and morals that grow and develop in people's lives. These moral values form the basis for determining whether an act constitutes a criminal offense, especially one that is contrary to sexual norms. In the realm of criminal law, criminal acts of morality include various acts that are considered to damage public morality, such as obscene acts, pornography, and sexual exploitation, whose character is very sensitive because it directly touches human dignity and dignity. Especially if the crime involves children as victims, then the demand for criminal law to be able to accommodate the shift in the form of moral violations in the digital era, including the dissemination of immoral

¹⁸ Law Number 44 of 2008 concerning Pornography, Article 1 number 1 and Article 4 paragraph (1), n.d.

¹⁹ Iqrar Iqrar, Rini Apriyani, and Alfian Alfian, "Legal Protection of Victims of Artificial Intelligence Crimes in the Form of Deepfake Porn from a Criminal Law Perspective," *Journal of Law and Citizenship*, 16.5 (2026).

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content through electronic media, becomes increasingly urgent in order to maintain the morality of society while providing optimal protection for victims²⁰.

Along with these developments, the regulation of moral crimes in Indonesia has undergone significant updates through Law Number 1 of 2023 on the Criminal Code, which redefines various forms of moral violations within a more up-to-date national legal framework. In addition, there is a special legal instrument in Law Number 44 of 2008 concerning Pornography, which expressly prohibits all forms of production, dissemination, and use of pornographic content in various media, including electronic media. One of the crucial provisions in this regulation is Article 4 paragraph (1), which prohibits everyone from producing, making, reproducing, duplicating, disseminating, broadcasting, importing, exporting, offering, selling, renting, or providing pornographic content. This provision is the main legal basis for ensnaring actors involved in the creation or dissemination of content with moral content, including those produced in digital form.

Thus, moral crimes are not only a violation of moral norms, but also a form of legal protection of human dignity, especially for vulnerable groups such as children. This is very relevant to this study which focuses on the study of the criminal act of manipulating children's moral photos as one of the real manifestations of immoral crimes in cyberspace that is increasingly complex.

Technology-Based Photo Manipulation Theory (*Deepfake*/AI)

Artificial intelligence-based photo manipulation, especially technology *Deepfake*, is a new phenomenon in cybercrime that uses generative algorithms to produce or edit visual content so that it appears authentic even though it is actually fabricated. Technology *Deepfake* Combining techniques *Machine Learning* and artificial neural networks (*neural networks*) to realistically replace a person's face into another body or scene, resulting in an image or video that is very difficult to distinguish from the original. This phenomenon has received serious attention from researchers due to its potential for abuse in the context of digital pornography and human rights abuses²¹.

²⁰ Alif Rizki Budi Cahyono and Fina Rosalina, "The Principle Of Legal Certainty Of The Meaning Of Violating Morality In Criminal Law Based On The ITE Law," *Journal of Golden Generation Legal Science*, 2.2 (2026), p. 296–315.

²¹ Syaputra Rendi, "The Urgency of Legal Protection Arrangements for Deepfake Victims through Artificial Intelligence (AI) from the Perspective of Indonesian Criminal Law," *Respublica Law Journal*, 24.1 (2024), p. 1–13.

From a criminal law perspective, *Deepfake* Not only does it threaten the privacy and reputation of individuals, but it has also evolved into a modus operandi of digital sexual crimes, including the creation and dissemination of pornographic content without the victim's consent. Studies have shown that image manipulation technology has been used to produce and disseminate pornographic content through social media platforms, while existing regulations have not been fully able to address the complexity of the crime²².

Furthermore, a number of normative studies in Indonesia reveal that existing regulations, such as the ITE Law and the Pornography Law, still contain shortcomings in accommodating the phenomenon *Deepfake* explicitly. This condition causes law enforcement officials to face difficulties in determining the right criminal offenses to ensnare perpetrators who use this technology in the creation of pornographic content, including *Deepfake* AI-based pornography²³.

In addition to the regulatory aspect, the impact of digital manipulation can be very broad and traumatic, especially if the victims are children. Realistic digital modifications to photos or videos that resemble child victims can have severe and prolonged psychological impacts. Therefore, a deep understanding of this technology and the urgency of comprehensive legal reform are very important in the study of criminal law enforcement in the digital era²⁴.

Thus, technology-based photo manipulation *Deepfake* It is not just a technical phenomenon, but also reflects serious challenges in modern criminal law, both in terms of regulations that are still relatively new and in terms of enforcement that must be adaptive to technological developments that continue to evolve. Theoretical and empirical understanding of *Deepfake* It is an important foundation in analyzing the crime of manipulating children's morality photos in this study.

Legal Protection of Children Theory

Legal protection of children is a fundamental aspect of the modern criminal justice system, considering that children are seen as a vulnerable group and have special rights that must be maintained to support their physical, psychological, and social development. Children

²² Novera and Fitri.Z, "Analysis of Criminal Law Regulations on the Abuse of Image Manipulation Technology (*Deepfake*) in the Dissemination of Pornographic Content Through Social Media Accounts."

²³ Nadya Tasya Putu Putri and Agung Ayu Anak Ngurah Rusmini Tini Gorda, "Legal Arrangements in Countering *Deepfake* Artificial Intelligence (AI) against Children as Victims of Cybercrime in Indonesia."

²⁴ Musfala Yudha et al., "Legal Protection for Victims of the Use of *Deepfakes* in Pornographic Crimes," *Indonesian Journal of Law And Shariah*, 2.1 (2025), p. 24–37
<<https://ejournal.unu.ac.id/index.php/ijsl/article/view/371>>.

are not just ordinary individuals, but legal subjects who need extra protection (*extraordinary protection*) from all forms of exploitation and violence, including those that occur in cyberspace²⁵. This protection includes preventive measures to prevent violations of the law, as well as repressive measures through effective law enforcement to ensure the full realization of children's rights. In the context of cybercrime, the urgency of this protection is even higher, considering the magnitude of the risk of digital exploitation that can leave a long-term impact on children's growth and development²⁶.

In Indonesia, the main legal instrument that provides this guarantee of protection is Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Amendments to Law Number 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection. This regulation emphasizes that every child has the right to be fulfilled, respected, and protected by the state, family, and society through various mechanisms, ranging from the prevention of violence, the provision of rehabilitation, to the restoration of the rights of children who have been violated²⁷. In addition, the principle "*best interests of the child*" or the best interests of the child are the main reference in every legal action. The application of this principle is reflected in the diversion mechanism, psychological assistance, and the investigation process with a child's perspective, as stipulated in Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System (SPPA)²⁸.

However, even though Indonesia has a fairly comprehensive legal framework, protection for child victims of sexual exploitation in cyberspace still faces various challenges in its implementation. The low digital literacy of the community, the weak supervision of online platforms, and the lack of coordination between law enforcement agencies often cause the protection of victims of digital exploitation to not run optimally²⁹. Therefore, legal protection for children must not only be reactive to crimes that have occurred, but must be a comprehensive prevention instrument through synergy between the government and society.

This is especially relevant in research on the manipulation of children's photos that

²⁵ Rumengan Christine, Regina, Tirta Koesumo Adi, and Altje Agustin, Musa, "Legal Protection of Children as Victims of Sexual Exploitation in Cyberspace," *Lex Privatum*, 15.4 (2025).

²⁶ Christine, Regina, Adi, and Agustin, Musa, "Legal Protection of Children as Victims of Sexual Exploitation in the SibER Room."

²⁷ Annisa Yulianti dan Clara Devi, Srianti, "The Effectiveness of the Child Protection Law in Preventing and Handling Child Violence in the Digital Era," *Al-Mabhats-Mabhats*, 10.1 (2025).

²⁸ Rosemaria Rosemaria, "Implementation of the Child Protection Law in Cases of Child Violence," *Ipsa Jure Journal*, 1.2 (2024), p. 22–28.

²⁹ Wulansari Wulansari and Samsir Samsir, "Legal Protection of Children Victims of Sexual Crimes in Social Media (Cyber)," *Mustika Justice*, 4.2 (2024).

violate morality, because this form of violation not only hurts legal norms, but also leaves deep psychological and social scars on children's future.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Previous research has shown that the application of restorative justice and diversion in the juvenile criminal justice system has become an important issue in law enforcement practices in Indonesia, especially at the police investigation stage. The research conducted by Tommi Kardo Purba and Setiyono examines the role of the police in implementing the concept of *restorative justice* against children who are perpetrators of criminal acts. The results of the study revealed that the police have a strategic role in implementing restorative justice, especially in order to restore the relationship between perpetrators and victims and open opportunities for victims to get rehabilitation. However, in practice, various obstacles are still found, such as the low awareness of the perpetrator's child, the fear or embarrassment to admit his actions, and the refusal of the victim's family to resolve through restorative mechanisms³⁰.

In line with these findings, research by Laili Nur Anisah and Arvita Hastarini on the implementation of restorative justice in diversion shows that, although the concept of diversion has been incorporated into the Indonesian legal system, its application in practice is still not running optimally. This study emphasizes that implementing diversion requires synergy among law enforcement officials, victims, perpetrators, and the community to achieve the goals of restorative justice to the fullest extent. In addition, coordination between institutions and the level of public understanding of the concept of diversion are also challenges in its implementation, so that in practice, not all children's cases can be resolved through the diversion mechanism³¹.

On the other hand, previous studies have also shown that cybercrime involving children as victims has received serious attention in legal studies. Research by Annisa Khaidir et al. revealed that normatively, legal protection for victims of cybercrime is regulated in various laws and regulations, but in practice, it still faces several obstacles, especially regarding the effectiveness of law enforcement and the protection of victims. Meanwhile, research by Theresia Vivin et al. confirms that children are a very vulnerable group to become victims of

³⁰ Tommi Kardo Purba and Setiyono Setiyono, "The Role of the Police in the Implementation of the Diversion of the Restorative Justice Concept for Children Perpetrators of Persecution in Berau Regency, East Kalimantan" (2024).

³¹ Anisah Nur, Lali and Arvita Hastarini, "Implementation of the Principle of the Concept of Restorative Justice in the Implementation of Diversion (Case Study in D. I. Yogyakarta)," *Justitia Ex PaX*, 39.2 (2023), p. 303–31. Ria Febriyanti

cybercrime, which is due to their low digital literacy amid the high intensity of children's activities in cyberspace³².

Although these studies have provided an overview of the application of restorative justice, diversion, and legal protection for children in the context of cybercrime, there are still more specific study gaps, especially related to the crime of manipulating children's photos that violate morality as a form of technology-based cybercrime. In addition, previous research has also not in-depth reviewed the mechanism for handling these crimes by police officers at the operational level, especially at the Resort Police level. Therefore, this study comes with a more specific focus, namely analyzing the handling of the crime of manipulating children's photos that violate morality in the police environment, so that it is expected to make a more concrete contribution to the development of criminal law in the digital era.

RESEARCH METHODS

Types of Research

This research uses a doctrinal (normative) legal approach that is strengthened with empirical data as support. According to Soerjono Soekanto, normative legal research is research that focuses on legal principles, positive norms, and doctrines that govern the handling of moral crimes. The doctrinal approach was chosen because the main source of analysis came from the case file (BAP) at the Cirebon City Police and the provisions of relevant laws and regulations, while interviews only functioned as supporting data and not as a primary source.

Research Approach

The approach used in this study is normative, which is an approach that is carried out by examining laws and regulations, legal principles, and legal concepts related to the problems being studied. This approach is used to assess the compatibility between the practice of handling the crime of manipulating children's photos that violate morality by the police and the applicable legal provisions in Indonesia.

In this study, a normative approach is carried out by examining various laws and regulations, including:

³² Annisa Khaidir, Mahendra Putra Kurnia, and Rika Erawaty, "Legal Protection for Victims of Cybercrime in Indonesia in the Perspective of International Law," *Al-Zayn: Journal of Social Sciences & Law*, 3.6 (2025), p. 10563–73; Nima et al., "Cyber Crime and Digital Security of Elementary School Children: Criminological Perspectives in Early Prevention in Primary Education Settings."

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- Law Number 20 of 2025 concerning the Criminal Code (KUHP), which contains general provisions regarding criminal acts and criminal liability.
- Law Number 11 of 2008 concerning Information and Electronic Transactions as amended last by Law Number 1 of 2024, especially Article 27 paragraph (1) which regulates the prohibition of the distribution or transmission of content that violates morality through electronic media.
- Law Number 44 of 2008 concerning Pornography, especially Article 4 paragraph (1), which prohibits the production, dissemination, and use of pornographic content.
- Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Amendments to Law Number 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection, especially Article 76E, which prohibits all forms of sexual exploitation of children.

Through this approach, the research aims to analyze whether the police's handling of the crime of manipulating children's moral photos is in accordance with applicable legal provisions.

Source of Legal Materials

The sources of legal materials in this study consist of primary, secondary, and tertiary legal materials that are used to support juridical analysis of the problems studied.

Primary legal materials are binding legal materials, namely in the form of laws and regulations related to the crime of manipulating children's modest photos, including:

- Law Number 20 of 2025 concerning the Criminal Code;
- Law Number 11 of 2008 concerning ITE as last amended by Law Number 1 of 2024;
- Law Number 44 of 2008 concerning Pornography;
- Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection;

Secondary legal materials are legal materials that function to provide explanations of primary legal materials, such as books, scientific journals, and the results of previous research that are relevant to the research topic. In this study, secondary legal materials were obtained from various scientific journals that have been used in literature review, including research by Tommi Kardo Purba and Setiyono (2024) regarding the role of the police in the implementation of diversion, as well as research by Laili Nur Anisah and Arvita Hastarini (2023) regarding the implementation of *restorative justice* in the implementation of diversion, both of which provide an overview of the practice of handling child cases by law enforcement officials. In addition, research by Annisa Khaidir et al. and Theresia Vivin et al. is also used as supporting material in understanding legal protection for children in the context of cybercrime.

Tertiary legal materials provide additional instructions and explanations to primary and secondary legal materials, such as legal dictionaries, legal encyclopedias, and other relevant sources, to clarify the terms and concepts used in this research.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Modus Operandi of the Crime of Manipulating Photos of Children That Violate Morality at the Cirebon City Police Station

Based on the results of research at the Cirebon City Police, it is known that the modus operandi in the crime of manipulating photos of children that violate morality is carried out through a series of structured stages. Perpetrators generally get photos of victims through social media, such as WhatsApp, online groups, and other social media platforms. After obtaining the photo, the perpetrator edited it using an artificial intelligence-based application (AI), such as Gemini AI or PicsArt, to create immoral content. The manipulated content is then used for personal gain, used as a collection, or even traded for economic gain.

When analyzed through cybercrime theory (Cybercrime), the pattern reflects the typical characteristics of cybercrime that uses digital technology as its primary means. *Cybercrime* It has an anonymous nature, is relatively easy to do, and has a wide range, allowing perpetrators to commit crimes without having to interact directly with the victim. This is in line with the theory that advances in information technology have given rise to new forms of crime with increasingly complex modus operandi, which continue to adapt as technology develops.

When viewed based on the theory of morality in criminal law, the actions of perpetrators who manipulate children's photos into immoral content are acts that are contrary to the moral norms that live in society. Such acts not only attack the honor and dignity of the victim as an individual, but also violate the moral values protected by criminal law. What's more, when the object being manipulated is a child, the impact is not only personal, but also has the potential to affect the psychological and social condition of the victim in an ongoing manner.

In addition, based on pornography theory, the actions of perpetrators who turn children's photos into immoral content are a form of creating digital pornographic content that is contrary to moral norms and the provisions of laws and regulations. Meanwhile, the deepfake/AI-based photo manipulation theory holds that the development of artificial intelligence has created opportunities for new crimes through visual engineering that can cause psychological, social, and reputational losses for victims.

In Indonesia's positive law, this act can be qualified as a criminal offense based on several legal provisions, including Article 27 paragraph (1) of Law Number 11 of 2008 concerning Information and Electronic Transactions, as amended by Law Number 1 of 2024, which prohibits the distribution or provision of access to content that violates morality. In addition, the act can also be charged based on Article 4 paragraph (1) of Law Number 44 of 2008 concerning Pornography, as well as Article 76E of Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection, which expressly prohibits all forms of sexual exploitation of children.

Thus, the modus operandi identified in this study shows that the crime of manipulating children's moral photos is a form of cybercrime with high complexity and requires an adaptive law enforcement approach in response to the development of digital technology.

Handling the Crime of Manipulating Children's Morality Photos at the Cirebon City Police Station

Based on the results of the research, the handling of the crime of manipulating children's moral photos at the Cirebon City Police is carried out through stages in accordance with the criminal justice system, starting from receiving reports, collecting evidence, identifying perpetrators and victims, examining witnesses, and coordinating with experts in the field of information technology. In addition, investigators also secured evidence in the form of electronic devices used in the crime. According to the theory of law enforcement put forward by Soerjono Soekanto, the effectiveness of law enforcement is influenced by five factors: legal factors, law enforcement factors, facilities and infrastructure factors, community factors, and cultural factors. In the context of this research, police officers, as law enforcers, have carried out their duties and authorities by receiving reports, collecting evidence, examining witnesses, and coordinating with parties with expertise in information technology. This shows that law enforcement factors have functioned as they should in handling the crime of manipulating children's morality photos.

In addition to being reviewed through law enforcement theory, the handling of this case can also be analyzed through the lens of legal protection for children. In this theory, children are seen as a vulnerable group that requires special protection from the state against all forms of exploitation and violence, including those that occur in cyberspace. Based on the results of the study, efforts to protect victims are carried out through assistance during the examination process, protection of the victim's identity, and the provision of psychological support to minimize the impact caused by the criminal acts they experience. This step shows that the

process of handling cases is not only oriented towards law enforcement against the perpetrator, but also on the protection of the rights of children as victims.

However, the results of the study also revealed several obstacles in handling cases, including limited human resources with expertise in digital forensics and limited technological facilities and infrastructure. In addition, coordination with other agencies takes a relatively long time, which contributes to the slow resolution of cases. This condition shows that although a legal normative framework is available, its implementation in the field still faces various obstacles.

When analyzed through Soerjono Soekanto's law enforcement theory, these obstacles are primarily related to facilities and infrastructure, as well as to law enforcement factors. The limited capabilities of digital forensics and the lack of supporting infrastructure are obstacles to proving technology-based crimes. This condition shows that the success of law enforcement against cybercrime depends not only on the existence of laws and regulations but also on adequate human and technological support.

Furthermore, until the time this research was conducted, most cases were still in the investigation stage and had not entered the court decision stage. This reflects that the handling of cybercrime cases, especially those involving cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), still faces serious challenges in terms of proving and tracing the identity of perpetrators.

Thus, it can be concluded that the police's handling of the crime of manipulating children's moral photos has been carried out in accordance with applicable legal procedures, but has not been fully effective due to technical and structural obstacles in the law enforcement process.

Juridically, the handling of the crime of manipulating children's morality photos must be guided by various applicable laws and regulations, especially those related to cybercrime, morality, and child protection. Based on the research results, the police have applied the legal basis of the ITE Law, the Pornography Law, and the Child Protection Law in handling this case. This shows that there is a compatibility between the practice of handling cases in the field and the applicable legal provisions.

However, if examined further, there are indications of a void of norms (*rechtsvacuum*), especially regarding the use of artificial intelligence technology in content manipulation. Current laws and regulations do not specifically address AI-based crimes, so law enforcement officials must interpret existing provisions to apprehend perpetrators.

Based on the provisions of Article 27 paragraph (1) of Law Number 1 of 2024 concerning Electronic Information and Transactions, everyone is prohibited from deliberately and without the right to distribute, transmit, or make accessible electronic information that has content that violates morality. In addition, Article 4 paragraph (1) of Law Number 44 of 2008 concerning Pornography also prohibits everyone from creating, producing, reproducing, or disseminating pornographic content. If the object manipulated is a child, then the act can also be associated with the provisions of Article 76E of Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection, which prohibits all forms of sexual exploitation of children.

On the other hand, the protection of victims is also an important aspect of this juridical analysis. Based on the research results, the victim has received protection through psychological assistance, identity protection, and legal assistance. This is in accordance with the provisions of Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection, which affirms that every child has the right to be protected from all forms of violence and exploitation. This condition is in line with the theory of legal protection for children, which places the state and law enforcement officials as the responsible parties to ensure the security, protection, and restoration of the rights of children who are victims of criminal acts.

Thus, the crime of manipulating children's moral photos not only meets the elements of moral violations in the digital space, but can also be qualified as a form of sexual exploitation of children that requires serious handling by law enforcement officials.

CONCLUSION

The modus operandi of the crime of manipulating children's modest photos that occurred at the Cirebon City Police involved the use of digital technology and social media. The perpetrator gets photos of the victim from various platforms, such as WhatsApp, online groups, and other social media, and then processes them using an artificial intelligence-based application (*Artificial Intelligence*) to produce immoral content. The content is then used for personal gain, used as a collection, or traded for profit. This mode shows that the crime that occurs is a form of cybercrime characterized by anonymity, ease of implementation, and a wide impact on victims, especially children, as the most vulnerable group. These actions are also contrary to moral norms and can be categorized as a form of digital pornography that utilizes artificial intelligence technology (*Artificial Intelligence*) in the process of making it.

In addition to being oriented towards law enforcement against perpetrators, the case handling process has also paid attention to aspects of protection of children as victims through

mentoring, identity protection, and recovery efforts in accordance with the provisions of applicable laws and regulations, including receiving reports, collecting evidence, examining witnesses, and coordinating with experts in the field of information technology. However, in practice, various obstacles remain, such as limited human resources in digital forensics, limited facilities and infrastructure, and lengthy coordination processes between agencies. In addition, some cases are still in the investigation stage and have not yet entered the investigation stage or court decisions, which indicates that the handling of technology-based crime cases still faces quite complex challenges

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