

Dynamics of Compliance and Law Violation in Society : A Criminological and Sociological Study

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Abstract : This study analyzes the factors influencing legal compliance and violations within society through criminological and sociological approaches. The primary objective of this research is to identify the reasons behind public compliance with laws and to reveal common motives for violations. This study employs a qualitative method, utilizing in-depth interviews and observations with selected respondents, as well as literature review to enrich the analysis. The findings indicate that legal compliance is often driven by social values, morality, and a sense of collective responsibility, while legal violations are largely caused by economic pressures, weak law enforcement, and public dissatisfaction with regulations deemed irrelevant. The implications of these findings suggest the need for a more adaptive and participatory approach in creating and enforcing regulations to effectively enhance public compliance.

Keywords: Legal Compliance, Sociological, Criminological

1. BACKGROUND

The phenomenon of compliance and violation of the law in society is one of the important aspects in contemporary legal studies. Various factors that affect people's legal behavior have become an interesting object of study, especially when faced with changing social and economic dynamics. Compliance with the law is not just a stand-alone legalistic issue, but a reflection of social norms, moral values, and complex socio-economic contexts. In this context, it is important to understand how individuals and groups view the law, as well as what motivates them to obey or break existing rules.

The aspect of legal compliance is often associated with the legitimacy of legal authority and the quality of law enforcement itself. People tend to obey the rules if the law is considered legitimate and relevant to their needs. On the other hand, weak law enforcement can lead to dissatisfaction and even encourage unlawful behavior (Nasution & Rahmat, n.d.). This is closely related to criminological theories that examine the motivations behind lawlessness, including the concept of strain theory and social learning theory, which explain how external factors such as economic pressures and social environment play a role in shaping criminal behavior (Nasution & Rahmat, n.d.).

The sociological context also plays a significant role in legal compliance. Social factors such as group influence, social norms, and a sense of collective responsibility also shape people's attitudes towards the law. In many cases, people's compliance with the law

is not only due to the threat of sanctions, but also because the law is considered to be in harmony with the values embraced by the community. Thus, the law can function as an effective tool of social control if it is recognized and respected as part of the culture of society (Rusdi, 2019).

Previous studies have shown that people's behavior towards the law is greatly influenced by their perception of the effectiveness of the law in achieving justice. Regulatory injustice or irrelevance is often the main reason behind breaking the law. People tend to see the law as a tool that must be adaptive to changes in social and economic conditions. If the law fails in this regard, the potential for violations will increase. A more adaptive approach to regulation is considered one way to increase public compliance with the law (Bambang & Handoyo, 2021).

In addition, economic factors are also an important element in understanding violations of the law. Many studies show that economic pressures, such as financial hardship or economic instability, can encourage certain individuals or groups to commit violations of the law (Nuraisah, 2021). In this context, the law must be designed by considering the economic conditions of the community, so as not to cause conflicts that can lead to unlawful behavior. The preparation of regulations that are sensitive to economic aspects is believed to reduce the potential for violations among economically vulnerable communities.

Public dissatisfaction with several regulations is also often a driving factor for violations. When the law is considered irrelevant or does not represent the public interest, then the potential for resistance or violation will increase. Therefore, public participation in the law-making process is essential to create more inclusive and representative regulations. In this case, a participatory approach aims not only to increase the legitimacy of the law, but also to ensure that the law reflects the needs and aspirations of the community.

From a criminological perspective, it is important to identify the motives for violating the law that often arise in society. An analysis of these motives provides insight into the dynamics of compliance and law violations that occur, and allows policymakers to design more effective law enforcement strategies. The theory of social control in criminology, for example, emphasizes the importance of social bonds and collective responsibility in preventing unlawful behavior (Syifa Santika, 2024). By identifying factors that weaken social bonds, stakeholders can develop more effective policies to improve legal compliance.

The implications of the dynamics of compliance and violation of the law in society show that the law cannot be seen only as a set of rules that must be obeyed. Instead, law should be seen as a dynamic element that interacts with existing social, cultural, and economic conditions. A more comprehensive approach is needed in the formulation and enforcement of laws in order to answer the challenges faced by modern society. Here, an adaptive and participatory approach is the main key to creating an effective legal system that is responsive to the needs of society.

Overall, this research is expected to make a significant contribution to the development of legal science, especially in understanding the factors that affect compliance and violation of the law in society. By identifying the criminological and sociological aspects that affect legal behavior, the results of this study can be the foundation for policymakers to design more adaptive, effective, and inclusive regulations.

2. THEORETICAL STUDIES

Legal Compliance Theory

Compliance with the law is one of the fundamental elements in creating social order. The theory of law compliance explains that people will obey the law if they see it as legitimate and relevant to their lives. Legal compliance can be associated with two main aspects: (1) legal legitimacy, where the law is considered legitimate because it reflects the values and needs of society, and (2) social influence, where people feel bound to obey the law because of collective norms. This perspective is reinforced by the theory of legal legitimacy which states that the law will be effective if it is recognized and respected by society as part of their social order. If the law fails to gain legitimacy, then the potential for violations will increase.

Legal compliance theory seeks to explain how and why individuals or groups in society comply with applicable laws. This compliance comes not only from the fear of sanctions, but also from the understanding, acceptance, and appreciation of legal values as part of social life. Here is a more detailed explanation of the main aspects of this theory.

Definition of Legal Compliance

Legal compliance is the level of awareness and willingness of an individual or society to submit to existing legal rules. This is related to respect for legal norms that are the basis of behavior. Abdul Manan stated that the law includes rules that control the behavior of individuals in society by imposing sanctions for those who violate the rules (Dr.

Muhamad Sadi Is, S.H.I., 2021). The law plays an instrument that maintains order and creates order in social life.

Factors Affecting Legal Compliance

According to Soerjono Soekanto, there are three main factors that play a role in motivating compliance with the law:

- a) Compliance: Individuals obey the law mainly because there is an expected reward or because they want to avoid sanctions from the authorities. This compliance is more external and is not based on belief in the purpose of the law itself.
- b) Identification: Compliance occurs as a form of effort to maintain good relations with groups or authorities that apply the law. Individuals may obey the law not because of their intrinsic value, but rather because of a desire to remain integrated within a particular community or social group.
- c) Internalization: This compliance is the highest level, where individuals follow the law because those legal values have become part of their personal values. They obey the rules not because they are afraid of being punished or to maintain social relationships, but because they consider these legal values important and correct.

The Process of Forming Legal Awareness

Legal awareness plays a role as the foundation of legal compliance. This process does not happen instantly(Aaron Alelxander, 2023), but rather goes through several stages:

- a) Indoctrination: This process begins early on, where individuals are taught legal values and norms through family, formal education, or social environments. The goal is for individuals to understand the importance of laws and rules in society.
- b) Habituation: The habit of behaving in accordance with legal norms strengthens the inculcation of legal values in individuals. By interacting frequently in a rule-enforcement environment, individuals will become more accustomed and comfortable obeying the law.
- c) Sikap Hukum: Legal attitudes reflect an individual's tendency to accept or reject applicable rules. This attitude is based on their understanding of the benefits of law to their social life. The more positive an individual's attitude towards the law is, the higher the likelihood that they will obey the rules.

Purpose and Function of Legal Compliance

Legal compliance has the main goal of maintaining a balance between order and peace in society. With high compliance, legal norms are expected to be accepted, respected, and internalized by society, so that the law can function effectively as a social instrument(Vindraputri, 2024).

In addition, legal compliance also serves to form collective behavior that supports the achievement of legal goals, such as the protection of human rights, social justice, and security. Therefore, legal education and socialization of legal values in society are very important, as this can increase people's understanding of the importance of the law, and in turn, increase the level of compliance.

The Importance of Legal Education and Socialization

The level of legal compliance can be achieved not only through the threat of sanctions or punishment, but also through increasing public awareness of the important role of law in maintaining social stability and order(Shomad & Thalib, 2020). Legal education aims to make the public better understand the applicable rules, as well as the reasons behind the formation of these rules, so that the public can see the law as an integral part of their daily lives, not just a burden or a limitation.

Overall, this theory of legal compliance provides a comprehensive view of how the law can function effectively if people have a high level of legal awareness and consider the law to be a representation of the values they consider to be true.

Social Control Theory

The theory of social control is one of the theories of criminology that highlights the importance of social bonds in maintaining social order. According to this theory, a person is likely to obey the law if they have strong ties to elements of society such as family, school, and community. Hirschi in Social Bond Theory states that the four main elements, namely attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief, affect the level of individual compliance with the law (Saragih, Bangun, Simanjutak, Damanik, & Astriana, 2019). If one of these elements is weakened, the individual may be more susceptible to committing violations. Therefore, social control through close relationships and collective responsibility is considered important in preventing deviant behavior.

The Theory of Social Control, formulated by Travis Hirschi in 1969 in his book *Causes of Delinquency*, is a theory in sociology and criminology that emphasizes the role of social control in preventing deviant or criminal behavior. Hirschi argues that every individual has the potential to engage in deviant acts. However, such actions can be avoided through the existence of strong social control and strong social bonds between individuals and society.

Basic Concepts of Social Control Theory

The Social Control Theory is based on the assumption that the potential to act deviantly is always present in every individual. However, deviant behavior can be prevented if individuals have strong social ties with society. Hirschi posited that when a person's social ties are weakened or severed, the individual is more likely to commit deviant actions. Conversely, the stronger a person's social bond with society, the less likely they are to commit deviant behavior.

Key Elements in Social Control Theory

Hirschi formulated four elements called social bonds, which are the main pillars of this theory. These elements are:

- a) **Attachment** : Refers to the emotional attachment that an individual has towards others, especially those closest to them such as family, friends, or authority. This attachment fosters a sense of responsibility and a desire to conform to social norms in order to maintain positive relationships.
- b) **Commitment** : It means individual responsibility for existing goals and norms. Those who have a strong commitment to a particular aspiration or expectation will better consider the long-term consequences of their actions, thus avoiding deviant behavior that could damage their chances of achieving those goals.
- c) **Involvement** : Refers to active participation in positive activities in the community, such as school activities, sports, or community activities. This engagement keeps individuals occupied with constructive things thereby reducing their chances of engaging in deviant activities.
- d) **Belief** : Shows the extent to which individuals believe in the norms and values embraced by society. When a person has a strong belief in social values, they are more likely to adhere to them.

Relevance in the Context of Modern Society

In modern society, the pressure to meet social standards often leads to inequality in social control. When individuals do not have a good relationship with society or when the social environment is not conducive, the potential for deviant behavior becomes higher. This theory of Social Control is relevant to understand today's social phenomena, especially in the context of family development, education, and social media that affect individual interaction patterns.

Overall, Social Control Theory provides a valuable perspective for understanding how social bonding and social control can serve as a prevention mechanism against deviant behavior. By strengthening elements of social bonds such as attachment, commitment, involvement, and trust, society can create an environment that encourages individuals to adhere to social norms and values, thereby achieving social order and harmony.

Strain Theory

Strain Theory, developed by Robert K. Merton, explains that an individual's inability to achieve a recognized social goal, such as economic success, can create tensions that trigger criminal behavior (Scott & Mikell, 2019). In an economic context, this tension arises when individuals feel high financial pressure without adequate support. Such tensions often result in behavior that is contrary to the law as a shortcut to meet a need or achieve a goal that is not legally met. This is relevant to the phenomenon of lawlessness caused by economic factors and shows that socio-economic tensions can be a major factor in deviant behavior in society (Wang, Ma, & Xia, 2022).

Strain Theory, developed by Robert K. Merton in 1938, is an approach in criminology that explains how social pressure can drive individuals to commit criminal acts. Merton bases his theory on the concept of anomie introduced by Émile Durkheim, who states that the mismatch between social expectations and the reality of an individual's life can trigger deviant behavior (Amran, Kunci, Agama, & Sosial, n.d.). This theory highlights the tension that arises when individuals feel unable to achieve their desired goals legitimately, prompting them to look for alternatives, including through criminal acts.

Theory of Compliance and Law Violation in Society

a. Dissatisfaction with the Law

Public dissatisfaction with regulations is often the main reason behind resistance to the law. According to this theory, people will be more likely to break the

law if they feel that the law is irrelevant or unfair (Samekto, 2022). In the study of legal sociology, legal cynicism describes a phenomenon of dissatisfaction in which people lose trust in the legal system because it is considered unfair or does not represent their interests. This theory emphasizes the importance of laws that are adaptive and responsive to the needs of society so as not to cause resistance and violation of the law caused by a sense of dissatisfaction.

b. Public Participation in Law Formation

The theory of public participation emphasizes the importance of community involvement in the law-making process to ensure that the resulting regulations are in accordance with the needs and values of the community. Public participation not only increases the legitimacy of the law, but also encourages a sense of ownership over the regulations made. Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation describes the different levels of participation, ranging from manipulation to complete citizen control. The higher the level of community participation, the more likely it is that the law will be accepted and obeyed. In this context, regulations designed with a participatory approach are expected to reduce the level of law violations because the public feels more valued and has ties to the applicable regulations (Ernawan, Utomo, & ..., 2024).

c. Social Change and Law Enforcement

Law enforcement is often influenced by social changes that occur in society. The theory of social change states that along with social and economic development, legal rules also need to be adjusted to remain relevant. When the law fails to adapt to these changes, inequality arises that can encourage violations of the law (Darmika, 2016). William Chambliss stated that the law needs to keep up with the times so that it is not considered archaic or irrelevant. This shows that legal adaptability in responding to social change is very important to maintain people's compliance with the law (Sugiyanto, Giawa, & Musoli, 2020).

d. Legal Legality and Legitimacy

In legal theory, legality and legitimacy are the two components that determine the effectiveness of law in society. Max Weber in his theory of legal-rational authority states that the law is considered effective if it has legality and legitimacy recognized by society (Sofiatul Hasanah, 2024). Legality is compliance with applicable rules, while legitimacy is acceptance of those rules. People who see the law as legitimate and relevant tend to comply with existing rules. On the other hand, if the law loses its

legitimacy in the eyes of the public, then violations will increase as a form of protest or indifference to the legal system.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

Type of Research

Type of Research (Ishaq, 2017). This approach examines the law from a normative and theoretical perspective, as well as examines the interaction between law and society. This research focuses on the analysis of the legal function in society, especially in terms of compliance and violation of the law, by paying attention to social, cultural, and economic factors that affect the application and response of society to the law.

This approach to the sociology of law allows for a more in-depth analysis of how laws are received, interpreted, and practiced by society. In this case, the law is seen not only as a binding set of rules, but also as an instrument of social control that supports the stability of society. The object of this research is the relationship between law and society, with a focus on compliance and violation of the law. This study analyzes how legal norms that apply in society can affect social behavior, both in the form of compliance and violation of the law.

In this context, the research objects include:

- a) Formal legal norms: Laws and regulations that govern people's lives, including criminal law, government regulations, and other legal provisions related to social control.
- b) Social and cultural norms: Values and customs that exist in Indonesian society that affect the interpretation and application of the law in daily life.

Source of Legal Materials

This study uses two types of legal sources, namely primary legal materials and secondary data:

- a) Primary Legal Materials: Relevant laws and regulations, such as the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, regulations on criminal law, and applicable social sanctions. Jurisprudence or court rulings relating to cases of compliance and violations of the law, which can provide further insight into the application of the law in practice.
- b) Secondary Legal Materials: Scientific literature, law books, journals, scientific articles, and dissertations that examine legal sociology theories, legal norms, and

social influences on legal compliance. Relevant previous studies will help to explore academic perspectives and theoretical understanding of the interaction between law and society.

Legal Materials Collection Techniques

The Legal Materials technique in this study uses library research which includes several steps as follows:

- a) **Analysis of Legal Texts:** Study legal texts related to laws and regulations, legal doctrines, and jurisprudence to understand the structure and interpretation of legal norms.
- b) **Previous Literature and Research Studies:** Collect and analyze various previous research, including journal articles, books, and relevant research reports. This step helps to uncover the theoretical background and sociology perspectives of law.
- c) **Identification of Legal Doctrines:** Analyze legal doctrines related to social control and the application of law in society, as well as theories that explain the phenomenon of compliance and violation of the law.

Legal Material Analysis Techniques

The collected legal materials will be analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis, with the following steps:

- a) **Analysis of Legal Norms:** Examining the content and intent of legal norms in laws and regulations and jurisprudence, with the aim of understanding how these norms regulate people's behavior.
- b) **Relationship of Law and Social Reality:** Analyze how legal norms are applied in social life and how social, cultural, and economic factors affect compliance with the law.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that compliance with the law is influenced by several significant social, cultural, and economic factors. Based on a normative analysis of applicable legal norms, it is known that Indonesian people tend to comply with laws that are considered fair and relevant to the social values adhered to. This reflects the theory of legal sociology which states that obedience to the law is not only influenced by legal obligations, but also by the social norms that apply in society (Abas, Amalia, Malik, Aziz,

& Salam, 2023). Secara lebih rinci, beberapa faktor yang ditemukan berpengaruh terhadap kepatuhan hukum antara lain:

- a) **Social and Cultural Values:** People tend to obey laws that are in accordance with the cultural norms and values they adhere. For example, in a society that upholds family values, laws related to family protection are easier to accept and obey. Conversely, if a law is considered contrary to cultural norms, then compliance with that law becomes low.
- b) **Economic Factors:** Social and economic inequality is one of the main factors in the decline in the level of legal compliance. People with low socioeconomic status are more likely to violate the law, especially laws that are felt to provide no direct benefits to them. This is related to conflict theory in legal sociology, which explains that inequality in the distribution of resources can affect people's views of legal justice.
- c) **Legal Education and Awareness:** People's knowledge of the law also affects their level of compliance. People who have better legal education tend to be more law-abiding because they understand the implications of violations that can occur. On the contrary, the low legal awareness among the community is one of the obstacles in achieving maximum legal compliance.

Violations of the law, whether minor or severe, often arise as a result of inconsistencies between legal norms and existing social realities. Based on the findings of the study, violations of the law often occur because people feel that the existing laws are not in their favor or are irrelevant to their social needs. Some important findings related to violations of the law in society are:

- a) **Violations due to Legal Injustice:** One of the main reasons people break the law is because they feel that the law is unfair or not applied evenly. For example, in the context of economic law, small and medium-sized businesses often feel that government regulations are more favorable to large companies, so they choose not to comply with these regulations.
- b) **Violations due to Social Environment Influences:** Violations of the law are also often affected by the social environment in which a person is located. People who live in environments with high crime rates tend to be more prone to breaking the law, because they are exposed to norms that consider violations as commonplace. In this case, social theories that speak of "devian subcultures" can explain how individuals

become more likely to commit lawlessness based on the norms that apply in their social group.

- c) **The Role of Law as Social Control:** Law, in this context, functions as a tool of social control to overcome violations and maintain public order. However, the effectiveness of the law in controlling people's behavior is highly dependent on how the law is accepted and applied by the community. An analysis of jurisprudence shows that inconsistent or biased application of the law can trigger dissatisfaction among the public, which can ultimately lower the level of legal compliance.

In analyzing the phenomenon of compliance and violation of the law, this study integrates the theories of criminology and sociology of law. Criminological theories emphasize more on the causes of individuals violating the law, such as psychological, economic, and educational factors (Syifa Santika, 2024). In contrast, the theory of legal sociology focuses more on the influence of social structure and the interaction between society and the legal system in influencing compliance and violation of the law.

The application of these two theories in the analysis shows that the violation of the law is not only influenced by individual characteristics, but also by broader social factors, such as social inequality, the education system, and the relationship between legal norms and social norms that apply in society (Yahman, 2020). In this case, the law must be seen as part of a larger social system, where obedience and lawlessness are the result of complex interactions between individuals and society. Based on the results of the analysis, there are several recommendations to improve legal compliance in the community:

- a) **Improvement of Legal Education:** More intensive legal education among the community needs to be carried out so that they better understand their legal rights and obligations. This can be done through legal counseling programs and formal education in schools that teach the importance of law for social life.
- b) **Legal System Reform:** The laws applied must be more responsive to the needs and social conditions of the community. Therefore, reform is needed in the legal system to be fairer and in favor of the interests of the community, especially those in the weak socio-economic layer.
- c) **Strengthening Law Enforcement:** Consistent and non-discriminatory law enforcement is essential to increase public compliance with the law. This includes the provision of firm but fair sanctions for violators of the law, as well as increased transparency in the legal process.

The dynamics of compliance and law violations in society are greatly influenced by various social, cultural, economic, and educational factors. The law functions not only as a tool of social control, but also as an instrument to create social justice. Therefore, to increase legal compliance in society, there needs to be an adjustment between the law and existing social conditions and an increase in legal awareness among the community (Nasution & Rahmat, n.d.).

5. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The dynamics of compliance and law violations in society is a phenomenon that is influenced by various factors that interact with each other, both individual and social factors. This research shows that compliance with the law does not only depend on the enforcement of the law itself, but also on how much the law is in harmony with the social and cultural values embraced by the community. Economic, educational, and legal awareness factors also play an important role in shaping people's legal behavior. People tend to be more obedient to laws that are considered fair and relevant to their lives, while violations of the law often arise due to legal injustice or incompatibility between the law and existing social conditions. This study finds that injustice in law enforcement and socio-economic inequality are often the main reasons why people break the law. Law violations are also not only influenced by individual factors, but also by norms that develop within certain social groups. This is in line with criminological theories that emphasize structural and social factors in influencing individual behavior, as well as legal sociology theories that see the law as part of a larger social system.

Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that the government and law enforcement agencies pay more attention to the aspects of legal education and socialization to the public. Improving legal understanding through counseling and education programs can help the community to better understand the importance of legal compliance. In addition, reforms in the legal system that are more responsive to the social needs of the community, as well as fair and non-discriminatory law enforcement, need to be carried out in order to create a more harmonious social atmosphere in accordance with the principles of justice.

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