



SOCIAL FACTORS AND LEGAL COMPLIANCE IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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Article	Abstract
<p>Keywords:</p> <p><i>Legal Compliance;</i> <i>Digital Culture;</i> <i>Social Institutions Article</i></p> <p>History Received : Nov.07, 2025 Reviewed: Nov.21, 2025 Accepted : Dec.15, 2025 Published: Dec.,29,2025</p>	<p>Legal compliance in the digital era cannot be understood solely through a normative framework, but rather as the result of complete interactions among social structures, digital culture, and public perceptions of justice. This paper explores the various social factors influencing legal compliance, including the decline of social role models, the erosion of collective ethics, the dominance of viral culture, injustices in law enforcement, and the failure of key social institutions to still legal values early on. The Authors use an empirical juridical method with the theory of socio-legal approach such as the understanding of sociology, legal compliance theory, ethics and social morality, social norms and social control, and digital culture with identity performance. This journal concludes that social factors influence public legal compliance such as digital culture on public perception of the law. The Authors argue that law can only be effective when it is present in people's lives in a fair, communicative, and contextually relevant manner.</p>

1. INTRODUCTION

The digital era has drastically reshaped the structure of society, including the way individuals perceive and respond to legal norms. As technology advances and the information flow becomes ever faster, changes in ethical frameworks and social behavior are inevitable. These changes often do not align with the formal legal norms enforced by the state. This gap raises sociological concerns, particularly when behaviors that contravene the law are normalized or even celebrated in the public sphere, especially through social media.¹

One illustrative example is the viral case of five junior high school students in East Lombok who were recorded stepping on their school report cards and then uploading the footage to TikTok.² This act was not only a violation of educational norms but also reflected a deeper erosion of social ethics and legal awareness. The school responded by expelling the students without due process or educational guidance, sparking public controversy. Meanwhile, the students' parents defended their children, claiming they were merely "victims" of digital technology and lacked awareness of their actions. This divergence between institutional response and parental perception illustrates the breakdown of shared moral standards between social institutions and families.

Such phenomena indicate that legal compliance today is shaped by multiple social factors: parenting patterns, the presence (or absence) of community role models, prevailing cultural values, the effectiveness of the education system, and social validation within digital networks. Social media platforms, particularly TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube, do not merely serve as tools for communication, but have become influential spaces where social identity is shaped and behavioral norms are negotiated. The pursuit of validation in these digital arenas (likes, views, comments) often overrides moral or legal considerations.

Within the discipline of sociology of law, this situation reinforces the belief that the law cannot function effectively in isolation. Its force and legitimacy are contingent upon how well it reflects and responds to the lived experiences of the people it aims to govern. As Tom R. Tyler emphasizes, legal compliance is more likely when individuals believe that legal authorities are just and legitimate.³ In contrast, in societies where laws are

¹ I Wayan Sudira. "Keadilan Digital: Tantangan Hukum Dalam Era Disrupsi Teknologi", *Kertha Widya Jurnal Hukum* Vol. 12 No. 1 Agustus 2024, p. 35-59.

² Fitri Rachmawati, Farid Assifa, "Kisah 5 Siswi SMP Injak Rapor di TikTok, Tak Hargai Guru, Dikeluarkan dan Berujung Penyesalan", <https://regional.kompas.com/>, diunduh 19/06/2025.

³ Khafid Abadi, *et al.*, "Kesadaran Dan Ketaatan Hukum Masyarakat Pekalongan Terhadap Penolakan Dispensasi Kawin", *Mitsaqan Ghalizhan : Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Pemikiran Hukum Islam*, Volume 04 No.02 Desember 2024, hlm 101-116.

perceived as tools of power rather than of justice, legal rules are often ignored or subverted, especially by marginalized groups who feel excluded from legal decision-making.

This condition raises a critical question: can legal norms enacted by the state remain meaningful and effective in a society where moral standards are constantly evolving under the influence of digital culture? If not, laws risk losing their binding power, becoming abstract texts that fail to regulate real behavior. Understanding this sociological gap is crucial, particularly when considering the impact on younger generations.⁴

This generation, commonly referred to as **Generation Z**, has grown up surrounded by technology. Born roughly between 1996 and 2010, they are digital natives who engage with the world through screens. They often display spontaneity, freedom of expression, and rapid shifts in focus. What seems to be lacking is the internalization of ethical reasoning and moral consistency. Ethics, in essence, is a rational reflection on what is right and wrong. It provides individuals with the tools to judge actions critically and take responsibility. Morality, meanwhile, relates more to social norms and expectations regarding how one ought to live to be considered a good person.⁵

Ethics and morality, while closely linked, are not interchangeable. Ethics requires self-reflection and an understanding of consequences, while morality is often dictated by societal standards. In the case of Generation Z, there is concern that digital culture⁶ prioritizes visibility over accountability, performance over principles.

Social ethics, which refers to unwritten norms within society, typically functions through mechanisms of social sanction. When a person violates these norms, they may be reprimanded, ostracized, or shamed. However, in digital culture, such violations may instead be rewarded with popularity. Acts once considered offensive or taboo are now often reframed as entertainment or self-expression. This inversion of social ethics poses significant challenges to the legitimacy and enforcement of law.

Furthermore, social ethics cannot be separated from the structure of community life. Humans are inherently social beings. From birth, individuals learn values, norms, and behavior through social interaction. They internalize these patterns into what sociology calls the *social system*. This interconnected system is what traditionally shaped a person's

⁴ Pratama, Muhammad Dandy. "Dinamika Hubungan Antara Nilai Sosial dan Penegakan Hukum di Era Digital", *Legal System Journal*, Volume 1 Nomor 1 Tahun 2024, p. 18-25.

⁵ Dedes, Ken, *et al.*, "Peran Media Digital dalam Meningkatkan Kesadaran dan Pemahaman Hukum di Kalangan Mahasiswa". *De Cive : Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Pancasila Dan Kewarganegaraan*, Vol. 5 No. 1 Januari Tahun 2025, p. 19-29.

⁶ Efrizon, *et al.*, "Budaya Hukum di Era Digital: Implikasi Sosial dan Kultural Media Sosial Dalam Penegakan Hukum", *Locus Journal of Academic Literature Review*, Volume 4 Issue 3, June 2025, p. 177-185.

legal consciousness. But when family institutions weaken, school's resort to punitive rather than pedagogical approaches, and religious or community figures lose relevance, the moral architecture that supports legal compliance begins to collapse.

As Satjipto Rahardjo asserted, law must be rooted in society to function meaningfully. It cannot float above the people's experiences or operate in a vacuum of moral support. Therefore, efforts to strengthen legal compliance must begin with repairing the social environments where legal understanding is first formed.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method used by the authors is empirical juridical, namely a research method that examines law in its application in society.⁷ The theories and concepts used are those related to socio-legal theory.⁸

2.1 Problem Statements

Based on the background explained above, the problems addressed in this journal can be formulated as follows:

- 1) What are the social factors that influence legal compliance in society during the digital era?
- 2) How do social values and digital culture affect society's perception and response to legal norms?

2.2 Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Approach

To analyze the issue of legal compliance in the digital era, this study adopts an interdisciplinary framework rooted in the sociology of law. The theories and concepts employed aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of how law interacts with social structures, cultural norms, and behavioral dynamics, particularly among the younger generation.

1) Sociology of Law Perspective

The sociology of law views legal norms not merely as a set of formal rules, but as part of a living social system. Roger Cotterrell emphasized that the core concern of legal sociology is not to assess whether a law is normatively correct, but to investigate

⁷Sumarna, D., & Kadriah, A. (2023). Penelitian Kualitatif Terhadap Hukum Empiris . *Jurnal Penelitian Serambi Hukum*, 16(02), 101–113. <https://doi.org/10.59582/sh.v16i02.730>

⁸Benuf, Kornelius, and Muhamad Azhar. "Metodologi Penelitian Hukum sebagai Instrumen Mengurai Permasalahan Hukum Kontemporer." *Gema Keadilan* 7, no. 1 (2020): 20-33. <https://doi.org/10.14710/gk.2020.7504>

how the law actually functions in society, how it is perceived, accepted, negotiated, or resisted by the people it governs.⁹

This study draws heavily on the progressive legal thought of Satjipto Rahardjo, who argued that law must be dynamic, contextual, and responsive to the realities of society. According to Rahardjo, law is not an autonomous institution that stands above society, but rather a social instrument that must evolve in tandem with societal change.¹⁰ This approach is especially relevant in the digital era, where rapid transformations in culture, identity, and communication challenge the traditional foundations of legal compliance.

2) Legal Compliance Theory

One of the most influential theories on why people obey the law is proposed by Tom R. Tyler. Tyler distinguishes between two types of compliance:

- a. Instrumental compliance, where people obey the law out of fear of punishment, and
- b. Normative compliance, where people obey because they believe the law is legitimate, fair, and morally binding.¹¹

This study argues that normative compliance is weakening in digital society, particularly among youth, who often do not internalize legal norms as part of their social values. Instead, behaviors are increasingly shaped by digital validation, peer influence, and entertainment logic.

3) Ethics and Social Morality

The discussion of legal compliance is inseparable from the concept of ethics. Franz Magnis-Suseno differentiates between ethics, as a reflective process of moral reasoning, and morality, as the set of values practiced within a society.¹² While ethics is concerned with individual responsibility and critical thinking, morality reflects collective norms and expectations.

In the digital age, both ethics and morality are challenged by a media landscape that rewards spectacle over substance. The internalization of ethical reflection is often replaced by the pursuit of attention, and moral discourse becomes fragmented across online communities with varying standards.

⁹Cotterrell, Roger. *Sociology of Law: An Introduction*. (London: Butterworths, 1984), p 4.

¹⁰Rahardjo, Satjipto. *Hukum Progresif: Hukum yang Membebaskan*. (Jakarta: Kompas, 2009), p 23.

¹¹Tyler, Tom R. *Why People Obey the Law*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p 25.

¹²Magnis-Suseno, Franz. *Etika Dasar: Masalah-Masalah Pokok Filsafat Moral*. (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1987), p. 14.

4) Social Norms and Social Control

Emile Durkheim's concept of collective consciousness emphasizes that laws derive their strength from a society's shared beliefs and values. When these shared norms weaken or become fragmented, as is often the case in digital culture, laws may lose their authority and relevance.¹³ The weakening of social control mechanisms, such as family discipline, peer accountability, and community sanction, also contributes to a growing gap between law and behavior.

5) Digital Culture and Identity Performance

The theoretical framework is further supported by insights from Erving Goffman's theory of presentation of self, where individuals manage their identities based on the social context they inhabit.¹⁴

In digital spaces, identity becomes a performance shaped by likes, comments, and algorithmic visibility. This shift fosters behaviors that prioritize online recognition over legal or moral alignment.

In conclusion, this study integrates these sociological, psychological, and ethical theories to demonstrate that legal compliance is a deeply social phenomenon. It cannot be understood outside the context of culture, identity, legitimacy, and institutional credibility, especially in a digital environment where the boundaries between public and private, lawful and unlawful, continue to blur.

3. DISCUSSION

Public compliance with the law is a social phenomenon that cannot be fully explained through the logic of normative legal frameworks. In many cases, people do not disobey the law due to a lack of awareness, but because the law lacks sufficient social meaning in the context of their everyday lives. Theories of legal compliance examine the reasons why individuals or groups obey or disobey legal rules. One of the primary theories in this field was proposed by Tom R. Tyler (1990), who argued that legal compliance is more strongly driven by public perceptions of the law's legitimacy rather than fear of sanctions.¹⁵ Tyler identified two types of compliance motivations:

- 1) Instrumental compliance, where individuals obey the law to avoid punishment; and
- 2) Normative compliance, where individuals obey because they believe the law is valid, just, and worthy of obedience.

¹³Durkheim, Emile. *The Division of Labor in Society*. (New York: Free Press, 1984), p 50.

¹⁴Goffman, Erving. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. (New York: Anchor Books, 1959), p 22-24.

¹⁵Tyler, Tom R. *Loc. Cit.*

Below are some of the main social factors influencing legal compliance in the digital era:

1) The Decline of Social Role Models

Social role models serve as a moral foundation that significantly shapes individual behavior, including legal obedience. In both traditional and modern societies, respected figures such as parents, teachers, religious leaders, tribal chiefs, or public officials have long served as powerful ethical references. Unfortunately, in today's digital society, such role models have experienced a significant decline.

This weakening of social role models did not happen overnight but is rather the accumulation of multiple crises: a moral crisis, a crisis of trust in institutions, and a crisis of value representation in the public sphere. Many figures once seen as exemplars are now part of the social problem itself, as corrupt officials, unethical educators, and religious leaders entangled in conflicts of interest. When these examples collapse, the law loses its social impetus.

According to Emile Durkheim, social integration requires a form of *collective consciousness*, reinforced by respected symbols of moral authority.¹⁶ When moral figures lose legitimacy, social norms weaken as well. This explains why in many cases of legal violations, society no longer responds with condemnation but rather with apathy, justification, or even glorification of the violations.

This phenomenon is visible on social media. Many young people today view influencers or digital celebrities as role models, even though many of them fail to uphold legal norms or social ethics. When public figures display hedonistic lifestyles, rudeness, or even unlawful behavior, these actions are replicated through what Albert Bandura termed *observational learning*, or learning by watching.¹⁷

The viral case of schoolgirls in NTB stepping on their report cards, for example, is not merely an issue of teenage delinquency. Rather, it reveals a deep lack of role models in their lives. There is no respected authority figure within the school or family environment and no strong social narrative that instills respect for education. As a result, symbolic acts of disrespect toward educational values become permissible, even entertaining.

In communities with strong social modeling, such acts would be corrected not only by formal institutions but also by local community pressure. However, when

¹⁶ Durkheim, Emile. *Op.cit.*, p 70.

¹⁷ Bandura, Albert. *Social Learning Theory*, (New York: General Learning Press, 1971), p 2.

communities respond passively or even defend the perpetrators under the pretext of "kids these days," the law loses its most essential ally, namely public moral support.

According to Soetandyo Wignjosoebroto, the success of law enforcement is not determined by the harshness of the sanctions, but by the extent to which the law has gained social and moral legitimacy.¹⁸ This legitimacy is largely shaped by the behavior of public figures who embody legal values in their actions. If such figures are absent or counterproductive, people will look for new role models, which often emerge in shallow and permissive forms, such as sensation-driven YouTubers or TikTok celebrities.

Moreover, exemplary behavior is not just a personal matter but also a structural one. The government, as the lawmaker, has a duty to act as a role model by applying the law fairly, transparently, and consistently. If law enforcers such as police, prosecutors, judges, do not show integrity, the public will question the validity of the law itself. When law is not accompanied by moral leadership, it becomes an empty symbol (present, but unable to touch the heart.)

Thus, the challenge of rebuilding legal compliance in the digital era lies in restoring a network of strong role models across households, schools, communities, media, and the digital world. Without role models, the law will remain a formal document that is not respected. Conversely, with living and relevant social examples, law will grow organically, from the hearts and consciousness of the people themselves.

2) The Erosion of Social Ethics

Social ethics function as the internal moral compass of a society. They exist in the form of unwritten norms that shape behavior and ensure balance between individual freedom and collective responsibility. These norms, often passed down through families and communities, help people determine what is considered appropriate, respectful, and responsible in daily life. However, in today's digital society, this ethical foundation is gradually weakening.

The weakening of social ethics is not solely caused by a lack of moral education. It is also the result of the rapid pace of technological and cultural changes that shift people's values. The rise of social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and

¹⁸Wignjosoebroto, Soetandyo. *Hukum: Paradigma, Metode dan Dinamika Masalahnya* (Jakarta: Elsam, 2002), p 85.

YouTube has transformed the meaning of morality in the public sphere. In these virtual arenas, recognition and visibility often take precedence over empathy and responsibility.

Franz Magnis-Suseno argues that ethics is a systematic reflection on morality, while morality refers to the actual values practiced in society.¹⁹ Ethics urges individuals to assess what is right and wrong and to act based on moral reasoning. Meanwhile, morality is often expressed through community expectations and social pressure. The problem arises when the ethical foundation that guides behavior is no longer strong, and when social morality becomes fragmented due to the influence of digital culture.

Among Generation Z, for instance, there is often a tendency to value expression over consideration. This is visible in the form of “edgy” humor, controversial content, or viral challenges that ignore the social impact of one’s actions. Many young people no longer view their actions through the lens of ethics but instead assess them based on the response they receive likes, shares, and followers. The moral meaning of actions is often lost, replaced by digital validation.

This ethical erosion becomes more concerning when institutions responsible for teaching and modeling ethics, such as families, schools, and religious organizations are also weakening. In many families, discussions about right and wrong are replaced by prohibitions or warnings without explanation. In schools, ethics education is often reduced to formal instruction on religious values or citizenship, with little space for reflection or debate. As a result, young people grow up without deeply internalized ethical reasoning.²⁰

The digital environment reinforces this trend. Online communities often reward shocking or rebellious behavior. In some cases, actions that violate social or legal norms are even celebrated. This reflects what Emile Durkheim called a state of “anomie”, a condition in which society’s norms are unclear or no longer regulate behavior effectively.²¹ In such a state, individuals feel free to act without reference to collective values, and the law loses its power as a reflection of shared ethics.

¹⁹Magnis-Suseno, Franz. *Loc. Cit.*

²⁰Ningrum, Diah. “Kemerostan Moral Di Kalangan Remaja: Sebuah penelitian Mengenai Parenting Styles dan Pengajaran Adab”, *UNISIA Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial* Vol. XXXVII No. 82 Januari 2015, hlm 19-30.

²¹Durkheim, Emile. *Suicide: A Study in Sociology* (New York: Free Press, 1951), p 241.

This condition poses a serious challenge to legal institutions. When social ethics decline, the law becomes an external imposition rather than an internalized commitment. People may obey the law only when being watched or threatened with punishment, but not because they believe it is just or necessary. In the long term, this erodes the authority of law and makes enforcement increasingly difficult.

To address this, ethics education must be revitalized in a way that resonates with current realities. Families must return to being spaces of moral formation. Schools must create opportunities for students to engage in ethical dialogue, not just memorization. Society must re-establish consensus on what is right and wrong, even as cultural diversity and digital complexity grow. Only by rebuilding a strong ethical foundation can legal compliance become a natural part of social behavior rather than an artificial obligation.

3) Digital Culture and the Quest for Identity

In the digital era, identity is increasingly shaped not by personal reflection, social relations, or moral development, but by how one is perceived online. In this context, self-existence no longer means *to be*, but *to be seen*. This shift is more than a superficial transformation, it alters how individuals define their worth, how they express themselves, and how they relate to rules, including legal norms.

According to Manuel Castells, we live in a **network society** where interactions and identity are mediated by digital platforms, which operate through logic different from those in conventional society.²² In this new environment, norms and values are no longer dictated by hierarchical authorities such as teachers or parents, but by fluid, decentralized online communities. In these spaces, approval is gained through algorithms, likes, shares, and engagement metrics.

This digital ecosystem creates new standards for success and visibility. Actions that would previously be considered disrespectful or unlawful are now often framed as bold or entertaining if they generate public attention. A person who commits a legal violation may even be rewarded socially if the act becomes viral. This distorts moral incentives and challenges the authority of legal norms.

The logic of digital popularity does not distinguish between good or bad content, it only responds to content that generates clicks. This is why youth increasingly

²²Castells, Manuel. *The Rise of the Network Society* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), p 403.

assess their behavior based on its potential virality, rather than on social appropriateness or legal correctness. A prank involving the police, for example, may no longer be seen as a disrespectful or unlawful act, but as a creative expression that garners attention. The legal implications are downplayed or even ignored.

. This phenomenon is closely related to what Erving Goffman described as the presentation of self in everyday life.²³ In digital spaces, the “stage” is now social media, and individuals become performers who continuously construct their personas based on audience reactions. Identity is curated and re-curated in real-time, and conformity to law becomes irrelevant unless it contributes to digital appeal. In this way, law is transformed from a behavioral compass into a background noise that is only heeded when it poses an obstacle to digital performance.

The danger lies in the fact that behavior shaped by audience reaction is unstable and often insensitive to real-life consequences. In the pursuit of views, users may perform increasingly risky or inappropriate acts. In some instances, illegal behavior becomes normalized if it is seen to reflect a rebellious or anti-authoritarian persona, qualities that are often romanticized online.²⁴

This environment also lacks a consistent ethical framework. In the physical world, deviant behavior is generally moderated by social consequences such as rebuke, isolation, or institutional sanction. But in the digital realm, such mechanisms are weaker. In fact, online communities may reinforce deviant behavior, particularly when they identify with the transgressor’s message or when the act resonates with collective frustrations.

For example, when a student uploads a video mocking their school or a traffic violator posts a video challenging law enforcement, they are often celebrated by like-minded digital followers. Rather than experiencing shame or reflection, they are applauded for their boldness. This phenomenon points to the rise of **echo chambers**, digital spaces where only affirming voices are heard, while opposing or corrective perspectives are silenced.²⁵

²³Goffman, Erving. *Loc.Cit.*

²⁴Septianingrum, Gita Ayu Ajeng. *et al.* “Teknologi dan Kepatuhan Hukum (Tantangan dan Strategi dalam Sosiologi Hukum)”, *Jurnal Humaya: Jurnal Hukum, Humaniora, Masyarakat, dan Budaya*, Vol 4, No (1), 2024, p. 47-62.

²⁵Tarigan, Edi Kristianta. “Peran Media Sosial Dalam Menegakkan Hukum Di Zaman Digital Di Indonesia”, *Jurnal Universitas Dharmawangsa*, Volume 19, No. 1, Januari 2025, p.188-201.

This leads to a serious sociological challenge. When digital culture overrides the mechanisms of ethical and legal control, social behavior becomes increasingly detached from social norms. Compliance with the law is no longer a matter of conscience or civic responsibility, but a matter of strategic calculation: “Will this make me go viral or not?”

To respond to this, law must evolve, not in its fundamental values, but in its **communication** and **engagement strategy**. Legal institutions must understand how digital networks shape behavior and find ways to reclaim moral authority in these spaces. Engaging ethical influencers, producing relevant legal content, and building online communities that uphold the values of justice and respect are essential steps. Without this shift, law will continue to be ignored, not because people reject justice, but because the law failed to speak in a language their world can hear.

4) Injustice in Law Enforcement

Legal compliance cannot thrive on a foundation eroded by injustice. When people witness the law being enforced inconsistently, discriminatorily, or manipulatively, public trust in the law as a vehicle of justice weakens. At this point, people begin to question: “Why should I obey the law, if the law itself is unjust?”

The phenomenon of injustice in law enforcement is not new in the Indonesian context. Various surveys conducted by credible institutions such as LIPI and Komnas HAM reveal that public trust in law enforcement bodies, such as the police, prosecutors, and judges, has often fluctuated or even declined during critical periods.²⁶ This decline significantly impacts behavioral compliance. For many people, the law becomes a formality that can be negotiated or bypassed, depending on one’s social position or access to power.

Lawrence M. Friedman, a leading figure in the sociology of law, refers to this as a dysfunctional **legal culture**, where the **legal structure** (the formal rules) is disconnected from the **legal culture** (people’s beliefs about the law) and **legal institutions** (the law’s actual enforcement).²⁷ In such societies, lawbreaking is not solely due to weak sanctions but due to the erosion of the law’s legitimacy as a fair and just norm.

²⁶Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI), *Survey on Public Perceptions of Legal Institutions*, Jakarta, 2021.

²⁷Friedman, Lawrence M. *Legal System: A Social Science Perspective*, (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1975), p 15–17.

A concrete example of this appears in land disputes involving citizens and corporations. In many cases, local communities defending customary land are criminalized for “occupying state land,” while large companies encroaching on indigenous territories are protected by authorities. The community’s sense of justice clashes with the formal logic of state law. As a result, legal avenues are abandoned, and citizens turn to resistance strategies such as demonstrations, blockades, or even horizontal conflict.

A similar pattern emerges in the digital sphere. While ordinary citizens may be prosecuted for posting content considered harmful or insulting, public figures or officials engaging in similar behavior often escape legal consequences. This leads to the perception of a **dual legal system**, namely one for the powerless, and another for the powerful. This perception is dangerous because it generates moral dissonance: people know the law exists, but they no longer believe it will be applied fairly. In social psychology, this is known as **moral disengagement**, which is a condition in which individuals cease to feel ethical responsibility toward norms they deem illegitimate.²⁸

This erosion of justice also affects legal socialization in families and schools. A child punished for breaking school rules may struggle to accept the sanction if they see another student commit the same offense without consequence due to social privilege. This teaches children early on that justice is negotiable, and that law is not a matter of moral principle, but of social leverage. It should come as no surprise if, over time, they view the law not as a guardian of justice, but as a tool of control.

Tom R. Tyler emphasized that legal compliance depends heavily on public perceptions of the law’s **legitimacy**.²⁹ If the law is seen as unjust, people are likely to disobey, or comply only in an instrumental way—out of fear, not out of conviction. In this environment, disobedience becomes not only common but also morally justified in the eyes of the public.

Therefore, the effort to rebuild legal compliance must begin with reforming the **law enforcement system** itself: ensuring that it is transparent, accountable, and equitable for all social classes. Fair law enforcement is not merely about punishing

²⁸Bandura, Albert. *Moral Disengagement: How People Do Harm and Live with Themselves*, (New York: Worth Publishers, 2016), p 21.

²⁹Tyler, Tom R. *Op.cit.*, p 32.

wrongdoers but about **restoring social trust** in the law as a shared moral standard for all citizens, regardless of their background, power, or privilege.

5) The Failure of Social Institutions in Shaping Legal Awareness

Legal obedience does not grow instantly; it is the result of a long social process, a continuous cultivation of values initiated from the smallest unit of society: the family. From there, the process extends through schools and communities. These three social institutions, which are family, education, and community, serve as the foundation for instilling norms, including legal norms. However, in today's context, these institutions appear increasingly fragile and ineffective in carrying out their formative roles.

The family, as the primary social institution, is supposed to be the first place where children learn about values, responsibility, and behavioral boundaries. Yet, in many families, the space for moral education has become vacant. Time constraints, economic pressures, and the lack of readiness among parents to face the digital era have led to a situation where ethical guidance is often replaced by gadget screens. In many households, interaction is minimal, and moral values are communicated only through prohibitions or superficial warnings. When a child violates legal or school norms, parents often defend the child rather than reflect on the family's role in shaping character.

This phenomenon was clearly seen in the case of the schoolgirls in East Lombok who stepped on their report cards. Rather than reflecting on the meaning of their children's actions, many parents responded defensively, arguing that their daughters were simply "victims of mobile phones." This response illustrates a **disorientation of responsibility**, where ethical boundaries are not clearly modeled at home, and the law is seen as external interference rather than part of shared values.

Meanwhile, the school, as a secondary institution, also shows similar problems. Many schools still adhere to a disciplinary paradigm that prioritizes formal obedience over ethical education. School rules are often reduced to prohibitions accompanied by punitive consequences, without reflective dialogue or value-based learning. Teachers tend to function more as supervisors than as character mentors. Relationships in education become rigid, formal, and emotionally distant. As a result, students see school as a place of control, not growth.

This condition leads to a detachment between students and institutions. When students perform deviant acts, such as vandalizing facilities, disrespecting academic symbols, or producing inappropriate digital content, they do not see these actions as attacks on shared values, but as harmless expressions of emotion. Schools lose their position as moral educators and are seen instead as authority figures to be outwitted.

Outside of school and family, the community also no longer serves as a strong source of ethical reinforcement. Urbanization, individualism, and digital isolation have weakened traditional social systems. Local communities that once upheld moral norms, exercised social sanctions, and reinforced cultural values are now fragmented or have moved into digital spaces that lack strong value systems. The absence of *organic social correction* has created a vacuum where misbehavior is left unchecked, or worse—encouraged.

According to Satjipto Rahardjo, law must not only be written but **lived**.³⁰ It must exist within people's consciousness, not just in legal texts. When social institutions fail to cultivate legal awareness, the law becomes abstract and alien. It may still exist, but it no longer resonates. In such cases, people follow the law only under compulsion, not because they believe in its justice or relevance.

Even worse, the failure of social institutions leaves room for other, often unhealthy, influences to shape behavior, such as consumer culture, viral entertainment, or deviant peer groups. Children and youth then grow not as conscious citizens, but as digital consumers who interpret values based on trends, rather than on responsibility.

The solution does not lie in increasing punishment, but in **strengthening social institutions**. The family must be restored as a space for dialogue and value internalization. Schools must be reoriented from control toward character development. Communities must be revived as ethical environments, both offline and online. Only when the law is nurtured from within society can obedience be realized not through fear, but through conscience.

³⁰Rahardjo, Satjipto. *Op.cit.*, p 45.

4. CONCLUSION

1) Social Factors Influencing Public Legal Compliance

Legal compliance in society is shaped by a number of interrelated social factors. First, the weakening of social role models leads individuals to lose figures they can look up to in understanding and replicating law-abiding behavior. When community leaders, teachers, public officials, or even parents fail to exemplify legal obedience, the law loses its living representation within society. Second, the erosion of social ethics causes norms, once instrumental in regulating collective behavior, to become fluid and relativistic. Digital culture, through algorithmic logic and virtual existence, often creates new values that conflict with formal legal norms. Third, injustice in law enforcement undermines public trust in the legitimacy of the law. When the law appears to work only for a select few, it breeds apathy or even resistance toward rules perceived as unrepresentative of justice. Fourth, the failure of social institutions such as families, schools, and communities in fostering legal values from an early age causes the law to exist merely as text, not as a part of lived social consciousness.

Therefore, social factors influencing compliance cannot be reduced to mere knowledge or fear of sanctions. They must be understood as the product of complex social relations-between structure and culture, between physical and digital space, and between lived experiences of justice and legal narratives.

2) The Influence of Social Values and Digital Culture on Public Perception of the Law

Digital culture has created a new social space that shapes perception, identity, and even ethical values among today's generation. Within this space, legal violations are not always viewed negatively; instead, they often become tools for expression, entertainment, or the pursuit of personal visibility. Society, particularly the youth is more influenced by immediate feedback from digital communities (likes, comments, shares) than by distant, rigid legal norms.

Here lies a moral shift from traditional spaces like family and school to algorithmic spaces devoid of ethical filters. Law, in its classical sense a symbol of justice and order, now often appears as an object of mockery, satire, or even symbolic defiance. This indicates that public perception of the law is inseparable from how people experience it: whether it is seen as just, approachable, and communicative or formalistic, elitist, and repressive.

Moreover, digital culture challenges the law to transform. Law cannot speak only from above through articles and regulations. It must engage in dialogue with new social

spaces, adopt a more communicative narrative form, and reach younger generations through media they understand.

In sum, legal compliance is a long-term social endeavor. It cannot be built solely through normative legal dissemination but requires the cultivation of values through moral exemplars, procedural justice, ethical education, and public participation in building a legal culture. If the law wants to be heard, it must begin by listening to society, in both physical and digital realms.

5.RECOMMENDATIONS

1) Building a Social Role Model Ecosystem Relevant to the Digital Generation

There needs to be collaboration between families, schools, community leaders, and the state to rebuild a social ecosystem of exemplary behavior that connects legal values with the realities of the digital generation. Role models must be embodied through real action and involve public figures and influencers in legal education. Exemplary conduct should be presented in accessible and relatable ways, so that legal consciousness can grow organically among the public.

2) Redesigning Legal Education as Value-Based, Not Just Informational

Legal education must shift from a normative-informative approach to a reflective-dialogic one. Teaching legal articles and sanctions alone is not effective in fostering long-term compliance. Legal education should engage students in dialog about justice and values, include case studies, critical reflection, and facilitate ethical reasoning—so that the law becomes not merely a prohibition, but a way of life that is just, humane, and meaningful.

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