

Legal Compliance as a Basic Human Need in Achieving Order and Justice

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Abstract

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This study aims to interpret legal compliance as a manifestation of humans' basic needs for order and justice through normative legal research, conceptual, and statutory approaches. Normative legal research was chosen because the study focuses on positive legal norms, principles of justice, and theoretical concepts of legal compliance, while the conceptual and statutory approaches are used to analyze philosophical ideas, psychological and sociological motivations, as well as legal regulations governing public Compliance. Data collection was conducted through a literature review of primary and secondary legal sources, analyzed using qualitative descriptive-interpretative methods. The results indicate that legal compliance is not merely an act of following rules but a reflection of humans' need for security, order, and social certainty, which plays a role in creating order and ensuring justice. Voluntary and conscious legal compliance becomes the foundation for establishing a stable, harmonious, and just social order.

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1. Introduction

Compliance with the law is not merely about obeying rules due to the threat of sanctions or authority. More profoundly, it reflects a fundamental human need to live in an orderly, safe environment that guarantees justice. Therefore, compliance with legal awareness is not only an indicator of obedience to regulations but also an awareness of the importance of maintaining order and justice in society.¹ Since the dawn of civilization, humans have realized that living together requires agreed-upon rules to prevent conflict, sustain harmony, and balance interests. In this context, law functions as a primary instrument that not only regulates behavior but also protects human rights and dignity as social beings.² Interpreting legal compliance from the perspective of basic human needs helps us understand that law is not merely a formal mechanism but also a moral foundation of social life.

In legal studies, compliance is often defined as individual or group actions that conform to legal provisions. However, this definition is narrow because it views compliance only as a linear relationship between rules and behavior. In reality, psychological and sociological motivations such as the desire to be accepted, avoid uncertainty, and achieve security also influence compliance. The human need for stability demonstrates that obedience is not just submission to authority but a rational choice to ensure collective survival.³ Thus, legal compliance can be seen as

¹ Dwi Retno Widati. "Pembentukan Desa/Kelurahan Sadar Hukum Sebagai Upaya Untuk Membangun Kesadaran dan Kepatuhan Hukum di Masyarakat." *Wicarana* 2, no. 1 (2023): 1-13.

² Ade Azharie. "Pemanfaatan Hukum sebagai Sarana untuk Mencapai Keadilan Sosial." *Lex Aeterna Law Journal* 1, no. 2 (2023): 72-90.

³ Laurentius Tinambunan. "Rasionalitas Kepatuhan dan Pembangkangan terhadap Kekuasaan Politik." In *Seminar Nasional Filsafat Teologi*, pp. 1-9. 2023.

an expression of the basic human need for order, allowing individuals to act without fear or unexpected threats.

Justice, on the other hand, is central in fostering awareness of legal compliance. Humans naturally reject unfair treatment. When the law fails to reflect justice, resistance to perceived unjust provisions often arises.⁴ This shows that legal compliance is inseparable from society's perception of a law's legitimacy. Just laws build trust and encourage public participation in enforcement. Conversely, biased and discriminatory laws generate social tension and threaten communal order.⁵ Therefore, justice is not only the goal of law but also a prerequisite for sincere and responsible compliance. The relationship between legal compliance, order, and justice is mutually reinforcing. Order can only be achieved when all members of society obey the rules. Yet, order built solely on coercion and fear will not last because it neglects the human need for recognition and dignity. Justice, meanwhile, requires a legal system that is transparent, impartial, and respectful of basic human rights.⁶ When people perceive that the law protects rather than oppresses, compliance emerges naturally as respect for shared norms.

In today's world, challenges to legal compliance have become increasingly complex. Globalization, technological advancements, and shifting social values challenge the law's ability to adapt to evolving societal needs. People are now more

⁴ Agustono Hutasoit. "Pertanggungjawaban Pidana terhadap Tindakan Perusakan atas Mobil dalam Aksi Demonstrasi (Studi Putusan Mahkamah Agung Nomor 982 K/Pid/2021)." PhD diss., Fakultas Magister Hukum, Universitas Islam Sumatera Utara, 2023.

⁵ Syamsu Adriyan Sahidin. "Peran Hukum dalam Mengatasi Konflik Sosial di Masyarakat Multikultural." *Legal System Journal* 1, no. 2 (2024): 42-50.

⁶ I. Gede Sujana and Rudi Ana Pali. "Hubungan Hak Asasi Manusia Dengan Demokrasi." *JOCER: Journal of Civic Education Research* 2, no. 2 (2024): 45-52.

critical of legal legitimacy and demand alignment with human rights principles. This reflects growing legal awareness, where compliance is no longer passive but reflective, guided by a sense of justice. Modern society seeks not only legal certainty but also harmony between laws and universal human values.

Furthermore, building an effective legal system requires public participation in enforcement. Compliance rooted in shared awareness is stronger than that which relies on coercion by authorities. Legal education, transparency in judicial processes, and consistency in enforcement are crucial for cultivating a sustainable culture of lawfulness. When people understand that the law fulfills their fundamental needs for order and justice, they see compliance as part of their social identity.⁷ Interpreting legal compliance as a manifestation of basic human needs thus offers a broader perspective for building social harmony. Compliance becomes not submission to authority, but an individual's contribution to preserving the balance of communal life. In this way, the law ensures that everyone feels protected, valued, and equally entitled to opportunities. When all truly experience order and justice, legal compliance will flourish as a cultural value and serve as a strong foundation for the continuity of civilization.

2. Literature Review

Legal compliance is not merely the act of following formal rules but represents the fulfillment of basic human needs such as security, order, and justice

⁷ Elda Arum Puspita. "Kepatuhan Hukum Sebagai Wujud Kesadaran Hukum di Masyarakat Desa Loa Pari Kalimantan Timur." *De Cive: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Pancasila dan Kewarganegaraan* 3, no. 5 (2023): 138-144.

(Soekanto, 2012). According to Maslow's theory of basic human needs, individuals require a sense of security and stability to meet other physiological and psychological needs. In this sense, law functions as an essential mechanism that enables people to live in a safe and orderly environment, fostering harmonious and productive social interactions (Tyler, 2006). When individuals comply with the law voluntarily, social order naturally emerges. Law serves as a behavioral guide that balances the interests of individuals and society as a whole (Hart, 1994). Research has shown that a high level of legal compliance contributes to social stability and reduces potential conflict by minimizing uncertainty and reinforcing public trust in the legal system (Rachmawati, 2018).

Moreover, legal compliance is closely connected to the realization of justice, both distributive and procedural. Justice is achieved when the law is enforced consistently and fairly, ensuring that the rights and obligations of all individuals are respected equally (Rawls, 1971). Compliance rooted in moral awareness rather than fear of punishment strengthens the legitimacy of the legal system and nurtures a collective sense of justice (Tyler, 2006). Based on this understanding, it can be concluded that legal compliance grounded in basic human needs has a positive influence on maintaining social order and achieving justice within society, thereby supporting the harmonious coexistence of individuals in a fair and stable social structure.

3. Method

This study uses a normative legal research method with a conceptual and statutory approach to interpret legal compliance as a manifestation of basic human needs for order and justice. Normative legal research was chosen because the focus of the study rests on positive legal norms, principles of justice, and theoretical concepts regarding legal compliance within the framework of fulfilling basic human needs.⁸ In the conceptual approach, the author analyzes philosophical ideas and legal theories regarding compliance, including the psychological and sociological motivations behind them. Meanwhile, a statutory approach is used to examine the rules in the Indonesian legal system that regulate public compliance with legal norms as an instrument for realizing order and ensuring social justice.

The legal material collection technique is carried out through a literature study of primary legal sources such as laws, constitutions, and related regulations, as well as secondary legal sources in the form of scientific literature, journals, books, and relevant research results.⁹ All legal materials obtained are analyzed using qualitative analysis methods with a descriptive-interpretive pattern to find the connection between the concept of legal compliance with the basic human need for order and justice. This analytical approach allows for the formation of logical and in-depth arguments regarding how society interprets compliance not only as a legal obligation, but also as part of fulfilling the essence of a safe and just life together. Through this

⁸ Taufik Firmanto, Sufiarina Sufiarina, Frans Reumi, and Indah Nur Shanty Saleh. *Metodologi Penelitian Hukum: Panduan Komprehensif Penulisan Ilmiah Bidang Hukum*. PT. Sonpedia Publishing Indonesia, 2024.

⁹ David Tan. "Metode penelitian hukum: Mengupas dan mengulas metodologi dalam menyelenggarakan penelitian hukum." *Nusantara: Jurnal Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial* 8, no. 8 (2021): 2463-2478.

method, it is hoped that a comprehensive picture can be obtained regarding the role of law in maintaining social order and building justice that forms the basis for the emergence of conscious and sustainable compliance.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Legal Compliance from the Perspective of Basic Human Needs

Compliance with the law is not only interpreted as behavior that submits to the rules set by the state, but also a manifestation of fulfilling basic human needs for security, order, and certainty in social life. According to Soekanto, compliance is essentially a result of an internalization process within an individual formed due to social influences that have an effect on a person's knowledge, attitudes, and behavioral patterns that will result in appropriate actions.¹⁰ Thus, when associated with the law, legal compliance reflects behaviors that are in accordance with the law. By nature, humans have a drive to live in an orderly environment so that every activity can be predicted and carried out with a sense of comfort.

When a society is well-structured, individuals will feel protected from threats and uncertainties that endanger their existence. Therefore, legal compliance is an important part of efforts to maintain social harmony that allows for the fulfillment of physical, psychological, and social needs in a balanced manner. This compliance also ensures proportional relationships between individuals, where everyone knows the limits of their rights and obligations, so that the potential for conflict can be

¹⁰ Shilvi Nur Aidha Widinawati. "Hubungan Pasangan Calon Pengantin Setelah Khitbah Dalam Perspektif Sosiologi Hukum Islam (Studi Kasus Di Desa Turus Kecamatan Gurah Kabupaten Kediri)." PhD diss., IAIN Kediri, 2024.

minimized through certainty of applicable norms. Thus, legal compliance can be seen as a reflection of the human instinct to live in a stable, orderly society and provide guarantees of protection for common interests.

2.4. Manifestation of Legal Compliance to the Realization of Social Order

Social order is a condition that arises from social interactions that occur according to mutually agreed norms and laws. Compliance with the law is an important foundation for the creation of an orderly social order, because every individual action has clear limits and measures as to whether it is justified or otherwise prohibited. In legal literature, Soerjono Soekanto, through his famous work, Legal Awareness and Legal Compliance, explains that legal compliance is essentially a behavior that submits to applicable legal provisions.¹¹ In this context, the law functions as a guideline that directs community behavior so as not to cause harm or disturbance to others.

If a violation occurs, the law enforcement mechanism is present as an instrument to ensure that stability and the value of order are maintained. Compliance with the law not only reflects loyalty to the state, but also a collective awareness that order is a shared need to create an environment conducive to human development. According to Robert, there are four things that form the basis for someone to comply with a rule, namely: (1) indoctrination, (2) habituation, (3) consideration of benefits, and (4) group identification.¹² Therefore, without consistent compliance,

¹¹ Ahmad Syahir, Ahmadi Hasan, and Masyithah Umar. "Kepatuhan Terhadap Hukum (Sebuah Perspektif Filsafat Hukum)." *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Jurisprudence, Economic and Legal Theory* 1, no. 4 (2023): 930-944.

¹² Ahmad Syahir, Ahmadi Hasan, and Masyithah Umar. "Kepatuhan Terhadap Hukum (Sebuah Perspektif Filsafat Hukum)." *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Jurisprudence, Economic and Legal Theory* 1, no. 4 (2023): 930-944.

laws will only become meaningless rules, potentially causing chaos that hampers social, economic and cultural activities in society.

3.4. Legal Compliance as the Basis for the Realization of Justice

Justice is a fundamental value that is the goal of every legal system. In the philosophy of law, Aristotle called justice the highest virtue that allows social relations to proceed proportionally. Justice is also a moral need for humans to be treated equally, have their rights respected, and not be discriminated against. Sukardi and Purnomo¹³ reinforces this view by stating that justice is the moral basis for the formation of a legitimate legal system. When society obeys the law, the distribution of rights and obligations is balanced and the interests of each individual are protected. Voluntary compliance demonstrates the belief that the law can guarantee justice for all groups.

Conversely, when the law is considered unjust, society will show resistance and deviant behavior as a form of criticism of this inequality. Rawls explains that justice as fairness can only be realized when the rules are accepted by all members of society rationally and impartially.¹⁴ This emphasizes that justice is a basic need that drives humans to obey the law because through such obedience, humans gain protection, recognition, and dignity as part of society. Thus, legal compliance is not simply an act of submission, but a human mechanism to ensure that every individual is treated fairly and without harm. Compliance provides a platform for society to

¹³ Sukardi Sukardi, and Hadi Rahmat Purnama. "Restorative Justice Principles in Law Enforcement and Democracy in Indonesia." *JILS* 7 (2022): 155.

¹⁴ Siti Malikhatun Badriyah. Sistem penemuan hukum dalam masyarakat prasmatik. Sinar Grafika, 2022.

maintain a balance of interests, minimize uncertainty, and create a dignified and humane living space.

5. Conclusion

Legal compliance is an essential element in maintaining an orderly, safe, and just social life. Compliance stems not only from the formal obligation to follow state regulations but also from the fundamental human need to live in a stable and predictable environment. Through the process of internalizing values formed through experience and social interaction, individuals develop behaviors that align with legal norms, creating harmony within society. This compliance then becomes the foundation for social order, as the law provides clear boundaries for behavior and mechanisms for resolving violations that can prevent chaos. In a social context, order is not simply a condition created by law enforcement but also a collective need that allows every individual to live a life safely and free from threats.

Furthermore, legal compliance plays a crucial role in realizing justice, the primary goal of every legal system. Only when the law is consciously and voluntarily complied with can the distribution of rights and obligations be proportional, and human dignity be respected without discrimination. Conversely, when the law loses legitimacy due to perceived injustice, resistance and disobedience become logical consequences that threaten the social order. Thus, legal compliance must be understood not merely as an act of submitting to the rules, but as a form of human participation in maintaining the balance of living together, protecting the interests

of each individual, and ensuring that the values of justice remain the basis of a continuously developing social structure.

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