

# Formation of Internal Legal Consciousness through Moral Value Internalization in Socialization Environments

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## ABSTRACT

*This study examines the process of moral value internalization through socialization in family, school, and community and its role in building sustainable legal compliance. A qualitative literature review approach was employed to synthesize theoretical and empirical findings from various scholarly sources. The analysis reveals that moral internalization develops through progressive stages aligned with cognitive growth, beginning from imitation of parental behavior to the achievement of postconventional moral reasoning. Internalized moral values form the foundation of legal consciousness that produces autonomous and stable compliance across different situations. Compliance driven by internal moral conviction demonstrates greater resistance to temptation, adaptability to social change, and positive contribution to psychological well-being compared to compliance based on fear of external sanctions. The three socialization agents function complementarily and require close coordination for effective internalization to occur. Success in moral internalization depends heavily on consistency between taught values and practiced behavior across all socialization environments. Social change and technological development present new challenges requiring adaptation of socialization methods. Building sustainable legal compliance demands an integrated approach combining law enforcement with moral education and strengthening of socialization agents.*

## INTRODUCTION

Compliance with the law in modern society is often understood as a product of the threat of sanctions and strict regulatory enforcement. This view places law enforcement officers at the forefront in ensuring that citizens comply with applicable provisions (Zhao, 2025). However, the experience of various countries shows that compliance based on the fear of punishment tends to be temporary and fragile. When supervision weakens or sanctions are perceived as no longer threatening, deviant behavior from the law often reemerges. This phenomenon indicates a fundamental weakness in approaches that rely solely on external deterrence. Sustainable compliance requires a stronger foundation, namely internal awareness derived from moral values embedded within the individual. Moral values function as an inner compass guiding human behavior even when no supervisor is watching. Individuals with mature moral awareness will obey the law because they believe that the rules are fair and beneficial for collective

life. The internalization of moral values is the key to building stable and long-lasting legal compliance.

The process of moral value internalization does not occur spontaneously; rather, it unfolds through a series of stages involving various agents of socialization in an individual's life (Həsənli, 2025). The family constitutes the first and most fundamental environment in instilling moral values in children from an early age. Parents and other family members serve as behavioral models that indirectly teach right from wrong. The school then continues this process through character education and instruction on the rights and obligations of citizenship. The environment in which individuals interact daily also contributes through social norms that are lived out and practiced collectively. Religious norms further serve as a source of ethical values that interact with legal structures in maintaining social balance within a pluralistic society (Mujito et al., 2022). These three socializing environments work synergistically to form a complete and integrated moral awareness. This process unfolds gradually alongside an individual's cognitive and emotional development

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from childhood to adulthood. Social change driven by globalization and urbanization also demands the adjustment of legal structures so that they remain relevant to the evolving values within society (Rizky et al., 2022). Moral awareness formed through consistent socialization will be more resistant to negative environmental influences.

The theory of moral development proposed by Lawrence Kohlberg offers a useful framework for understanding how an individual's moral reasoning develops from simpler to more complex stages (Li, 2022). According to Kohlberg, human moral development progresses through six stages grouped into three main levels: preconventional, conventional, and postconventional. At the preconventional level, an individual's moral behavior is driven by the desire to avoid punishment and obtain rewards. The conventional level is marked by an orientation toward social acceptance and compliance with the rules prevailing within a group. The postconventional level represents the highest stage, in which individuals are able to consider universal principles of justice and human rights. Individuals who reach the postconventional level obey the law not out of fear of sanctions but because of their belief that the law aligns with the moral principles they hold. The principle of freedom of expression that still restricts hate speech within a democratic legal system represents a concrete manifestation of this postconventional moral reasoning (Udjari et al., 2022). Moral development toward a higher stage greatly determines the quality of a person's legal compliance.

Social psychology offers an additional perspective on how moral values are internalized through an individual's interaction with their social environment. The internalization process involves accepting external values as part of an autonomous personal belief system (Myry, 2022). Individuals do not merely imitate the behavior of others but actively interpret and adopt values they consider suitable for themselves. This process is reinforced through identification with admired figures, as well as through direct experience in confronting moral dilemmas. The tendency to choose mediation over litigation within multicultural societies also reflects how an individual's moral awareness shapes the way conflicts are resolved fairly (Saputra et al., 2022). A supportive social environment that consistently applies moral values will facilitate more effective internalization. An environment full of contradictions between words and actions will hinder the internalization process and create moral confusion. Successful internalization produces a

strong internal commitment to the moral values held. This commitment is then manifested in daily behavior consistent with moral principles, including legal compliance.

The difference between compliance driven by fear of sanctions and compliance grounded in moral awareness carries important implications for law enforcement efforts. External compliance is conditional and depends on the presence of effective supervision and enforcement mechanisms (Bottoms & Bottoms, 2019). When supervision weakens or sanctions are no longer perceived as sufficiently threatening, compliant behavior tends to decline sharply. Consumer compliance with legal provisions in cases such as digital banking account tampering or lost goods handled by freight forwarders generally still depends on the strength of supervision and the protection mechanisms available (Fitrotinisak et al., 2023; Supriyanto et al., 2023). Internal compliance is more stable and self-sustaining because it stems from an individual's own conviction about what is right and just. Individuals with a high level of moral awareness will continue to obey the law even in situations where violations go undetected. This makes the internalization of moral values a long-term investment in creating sustainable social order. A society whose members possess mature moral awareness will require lower law enforcement costs compared to a society that relies solely on the threat of punishment. Strengthening national regulation, for instance in protecting well-known trademarks amid global counterfeiting challenges, shows that legal institutions still require continuous renewal (Yani et al., 2023). Building moral awareness through various channels of socialization is a priority no less important than strengthening law enforcement institutions.

The first problem in building sustainable legal compliance is society's tendency to emphasize repressive measures while neglecting the cultural, preventive side of the law. Law enforcement policy in many countries is still dominated by a punishment-oriented approach, with large budget allocations directed toward the police, the judiciary, and correctional institutions. Investment in character education and the socialization of moral values, by contrast, is often treated as secondary, as if it carried no direct bearing on legal compliance. This view overlooks the fact that lasting compliance cannot be imposed from outside; it must grow from citizens' internal awareness. The weakness of a purely repressive approach becomes especially visible in violations committed by individuals with strong educational backgrounds and favorable social standing. People who rationally know that an act is

unlawful still commit it, because no internal conviction restrains them. A comparable pattern appears in default cases arising from sale-purchase transactions, where the clear availability of legal consequences has not stopped business actors from disregarding their obligations (Aryanto et al., 2023). This confirms that legal knowledge alone cannot guarantee compliance without mature moral awareness (Finckenauer, 2023).

The family, as the primary agent of socialization, faces mounting pressure from shifts in social structure, including the growing number of working parents and the shrinking time parents spend with their children. Schools, too, struggle to fulfill their educational role, since the pressure to meet academic targets frequently pushes character education aside. Local communities that once reinforced shared social norms have been worn down by urbanization and rising individualism. This matters because informal dispute-resolution practices rooted in local values, including those long used to settle inheritance disputes, depend heavily on the strength of exactly these social ties (Futriyah et al., 2023). Information technology and social media, meanwhile, introduce influences that do not always align with the moral values traditional socialization agents try to instill; children and adolescents are now exposed to content that frequently contradicts the morality taught at home and in school. A restorative approach to handling speech-related disputes in digital spaces has emerged as one attempt to close this value gap without relying solely on criminal sanctions (Darmawan & Negara, 2023). The result is moral confusion among the younger generation, which in turn weakens the foundation of legal compliance in the years ahead.

Rates of legal violation remain high across many countries despite continually rising law-enforcement budgets. Corruption cases involving public officials who should serve as role models have instead grown more frequent, pointing to a moral crisis among elites (Akmal, 2024). The problem deepens further given that even aggrieved rights-holders often face substantial obstacles when pursuing civil claims, so formal enforcement channels do not always function effectively in practice (Hardyansah et al., 2021). This shows that enforcement built on sanctions and surveillance alone cannot address the root causes of non-compliance. A more fundamental approach is needed, one that engages individual awareness and character directly. Such an approach demands sustained investment over a long period, but its results are far more durable than those of a repressive strategy. Advances in developmental psychology

and moral education offer a solid theoretical foundation for building value-based legal awareness. Without a deep understanding of how moral internalization occurs, any effort to strengthen legal compliance will stall short of its intended outcome.

Young people today grow up in an environment almost unrestricted in its exposure to foreign cultural influence through the internet. The individualism and consumerism carried by global culture often clash with the collectivism and simplicity that characterize many traditional societies (Djumat et al., 2025). This clash of values creates a complex moral dilemma as individuals try to determine their own stance and conduct. Without a firm moral foundation, individuals drift easily under competing influences and struggle to distinguish right from wrong. Internalizing moral values therefore becomes increasingly essential, giving individuals something solid to hold onto amid rapid change. Systematic efforts are needed to strengthen the capacity of socialization agents to carry out this task. Research into the mechanisms of moral internalization can guide the formulation of more effective educational and social policy.

The purpose of this writing is to theoretically examine the process of moral value internalization through three main socialization institutions family, school, and community and to analyze how this process shapes internal legal awareness in individuals. This writing also aims to compare the stability of legal compliance sourced from internal moral awareness with compliance driven by fear of external sanctions. Through a systematic review, this research seeks to identify key factors influencing the success of moral value internalization and to explain the psychological mechanisms underlying the differences in compliance quality between the two types of motivation.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research applies a qualitative literature study approach as the main methodological framework in examining the process of moral value internalization and its influence on legal compliance. This approach was chosen because the research objective is to understand social phenomena interpretatively through the synthesis of theoretical knowledge from various scientific sources. Creswell (2009) explains that qualitative research is oriented toward understanding the meaning constructed by individuals regarding their experiences, making it suitable for examining how moral values are embedded in consciousness and influence compliance behavior. Qualitative literature studies

enable researchers to identify, evaluate, and interpret findings from previous research without conducting primary data collection in the field. The data sources in this research originate from scientific publications such as journals, books, and conference proceedings discussing theories of moral development, value internalization, legal awareness, and moral-based compliance. The selection of sources is carried out through searches of academic databases with relevant keywords, as well as applying clear inclusion criteria to guarantee the quality of the analyzed literature (Quintiliani, 2025).

The analysis procedure in this research follows a systematic workflow consisting of data collection, reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing from the gathered literature (Qayyum, 2024). Fink (2005) asserts that a quality literature study must be systematic, explicit, and reproducible, with clear formulations of objectives and selection criteria to minimize bias. The initial stage of the research includes topic identification and the formulation of sharp research questions, followed by literature searches on prominent databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. The screening process is conducted based on the relevance of titles and abstracts to the research topic, as well as considering the credibility of publication sources. This research performs thematic analysis on the content of the selected literature to identify patterns of relationships between concepts, such as internalization mechanisms, stages of moral development, and differences in compliance quality. The validity of the findings is maintained through cross-source triangulation and comparison of various theoretical perspectives. This approach allows researchers to build a complete understanding of how moral values function as the foundation for sustainable legal compliance in society.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### **The Internalization of Moral Values through Family, School, and Community Socialization in Shaping Internal Legal Awareness**

The internalization of moral values is a long process that begins in childhood and lasts throughout a person's life through their interactions with their social environment. The family acts as the primary socialization agent that lays the foundations of moral awareness through parenting, exemplary behavior, and the communication of values. Parents who consistently apply household rules with explanations of the moral reasons behind those rules help children develop more mature moral reasoning. The enforcement of authoritarian rules without

rational explanations tends to produce compliance that is superficial and dependent on the threat of punishment (Azimli, 2024). Open and democratic communication patterns within the family allow children to ask questions and discuss moral dilemmas, which stimulates their moral cognitive development. Children raised in an environment that emphasizes empathy and care for others will internalize prosocial values that form the foundation of legal compliance. Early experiences within the family shape moral schemas that will continue to evolve alongside individual interactions with the broader social environment.

The school plays an important role in continuing the process of moral value internalization that began in the family through structured character education and curriculum. Teachers not only transfer knowledge about rules and law but also serve as behavioral models demonstrating how moral values are enacted in daily conduct. Learning methods involving discussions of moral dilemmas, case studies of ethical violations, and value reflection help students develop moral reasoning toward a higher stage (Ramadhani et al., 2024). A school environment that applies procedural justice in decision-making, such as in granting sanctions and rewards, teaches students the importance of fairness as a fundamental value in shared life. This principle of fairness echoes findings on dispute resolution across cultures, where the acceptability of an outcome is shaped less by the method chosen than by how fairly the process is perceived (Saputra et al., 2022). Interaction with peers at school also provides opportunities to practice moral negotiation and test value convictions within a broader social scope. Extracurricular activities oriented toward public service and social concern strengthen moral commitment through direct experience of helping others. A school that successfully integrates moral education across the curriculum will produce graduates who are not only academically capable but also morally mature.

The wider social environment is a third socializing setting that reinforces and tests the moral values already internalized through family and school within a more diverse public life. Social norms alive within this setting, such as mutual cooperation, honesty in transactions, and responsibility toward the environment, serve as a laboratory for individuals to practice moral values in real situations. Participation in social activities, religious organizations, and other civic institutions provides collective experience that deepens understanding of shared values (Hasan et al., 2025). Role models within this setting, including religious leaders, function as an ethical bridge linking



religious norms with legal structures to maintain balance in a pluralistic society (Mujito et al., 2022), reinforcing value internalization through examples that can be observed directly. Informal social sanctions imposed on members who violate norms still have a reinforcing effect on compliance with shared values. The internalization process here occurs through observational learning, in which individuals observe the consequences of others' behavior and adjust their own accordingly. A cohesive social environment with strong moral values creates conditions conducive to the development of internal legal awareness among its members.

Internal legal awareness formed through the process of moral value internalization is qualitatively different from mere knowledge of legal rules. Individuals with internal legal awareness do not simply know that an act is prohibited by law but also believe that the act is morally wrong and harmful to others (Abdulaeva & Rasulov, 2025). This conviction becomes internalized as part of one's personal value system, so that violating the law produces guilt and psychological discomfort. Guilt arising from the violation of internal moral values functions as a more effective self-control mechanism than fear of detection and external punishment. Internal legal awareness also includes understanding the law's purpose as an instrument for realizing justice and social order, rather than merely a set of prohibitions to be obeyed out of fear of sanction. This understanding aligns with the view that legal structures must continually adjust to accommodate the social changes brought by globalization and urbanization so that the law remains relevant and just (Rizky et al., 2022). Individuals with such awareness tend to actively defend the law and report violations they encounter because they feel responsible for upholding justice in society. The capacity to consider others' perspectives and the impact of one's behavior on collective welfare is a key trait of mature legal awareness.

The process of moral value internalization unfolds gradually alongside an individual's cognitive development, moving from simple understanding toward more complex and abstract moral reasoning. Young children begin internalizing values by imitating parental behavior and forming an early understanding of the positive consequences of good conduct. In middle childhood, value internalization deepens through understanding the rules and social expectations prevailing in the surrounding environment. Entering adolescence, individuals begin to question and evaluate previously accepted values while developing a more autonomous personal value system (Beerthuizen &

Brugman, 2013). This developmental stage is critical because individuals start distinguishing between compliance driven by social pressure and compliance grounded in internal conviction. Adolescents who successfully navigate this phase of moral exploration with a healthy environment will develop a more stable value commitment in adulthood. Adolescents who experience value confusion due to an inconsistent environment may remain trapped in external compliance without ever reaching authentic internal awareness. Sustained support from family, school, and the wider social environment is decisive for an individual's success through each stage of this moral development.

Consistency among the values taught in the family, school, and wider social environment largely determines the overall effectiveness of the internalization process. Inconsistency between what is taught at home and what is practiced at school or in society creates moral confusion that hinders the formation of solid internal awareness. A child taught honesty at home but who witnesses dishonesty at school will experience a value conflict that damages their trust in that value (Shapovalova, 2025). Coordination among these socializing agents in establishing and applying the same moral values creates conditions favorable to effective internalization. This need for coordinated compliance is comparable to how consumer protection is upheld across different sectors, whether in resolving disputes over digital banking account tampering or in handling goods lost by freight forwarders, both of which depend on consistent enforcement mechanisms to be effective (Fitrotinisak et al., 2023; Supriyanto et al., 2023). Programs that involve parents, teachers, and public figures together in moral education can strengthen the consistency of the value messages children receive. Open communication between family and school about a child's moral development allows for early intervention when problems arise. Moral value internalization is the result of systemic cooperation among all socializing agents, not merely the separate responsibility of each.

Technological development and social change have altered the dynamics of moral value internalization, presenting both challenges and opportunities for the formation of legal awareness. Broad access to information through the internet exposes children and adolescents to a wide range of content carrying diverse values, sometimes contradicting those taught by traditional socializing agents. Social media creates new spaces for moral identity formation influenced by public figures and virtual communities that do not always hold a positive

value commitment (Mazur, 2025). Technology also provides a means to spread moral education content and inspiring stories that can strengthen value internalization. Cases such as unauthorized account tampering in digital banking services illustrate how legal compliance is increasingly tested in virtual spaces where consumers must rely on legal protection mechanisms to safeguard their rights (Fitrotinisak et al., 2023). The challenge for family and school is how to use technology as a tool that supports the internalization process rather than allowing it to become an obstacle. Digital literacy that includes the ability to evaluate content morally is an important skill that needs to be taught to the younger generation. An approach to value internalization in the digital era requires adapting delivery methods suited to the characteristics of a generation growing up alongside technology.

Moral maturity achieved through the process of value internalization in family, school, and the wider social environment produces individuals capable of making independent ethical decisions in complex situations. Morally mature individuals hold firm internal principles that guide their actions even when facing strong social pressure or the temptation of personal gain (Khare, 2025). The capacity to consider the long-term consequences of one's actions toward others and society is a hallmark of higher-level moral reasoning. Individuals with such moral maturity are not easily swayed by shifting social norms or momentary environmental influence. This steadiness is evident, for instance, in how national regulations must continually be strengthened to protect well-known trademarks from global counterfeiting, reflecting a broader commitment to upholding what is right despite external pressure (Yani et al., 2023). They also possess the courage to voice disagreement with injustice and take positions consistent with their moral convictions. This mature moral quality forms the foundation for sustained legal compliance, as compliance arises from awareness rather than compulsion. A society composed of individuals with high moral maturity will achieve better legal compliance at a lower cost of enforcement. Investment in moral education across all channels of socialization is a strategic investment in creating sustainable social order.

Cultural differences among societies influence the priority of internalized moral values and the way legal compliance is manifested in daily life. Societies that highly value collectivism tend to internalize values emphasizing social harmony and responsibility toward the group. Individualistic societies place greater emphasis on personal autonomy and individual rights as the basis for legal compliance. This difference does

not mean that one value is better than another, but rather indicates that the internalization process must consider the cultural scope in which these values are instilled (Gao & Qian, 2025). Internalized moral values will be more effective if they align with the dominant values in society, as individuals feel that legal compliance is part of their cultural identity. Nevertheless, universal values such as justice, respect for human dignity, and care for others remain relevant across all cultures as the foundation of legal compliance. The challenge for multicultural societies is how to accommodate value diversity without compromising universally agreed-upon basic moral principles. Moral education that respects cultural diversity while instilling a commitment to universal values becomes the key to successful internalization amid a heterogeneous society.

The role of the community in strengthening the internalization of moral values is increasingly important amid the weakening influence of families and schools due to the pressures of modernization. Strong communities with dense social networks provide informal social control mechanisms that are effective in maintaining compliance with shared values. Community members who know and care for one another tend to be more obedient to social norms because their reputation and social relationships depend on that compliance. Social sanctions such as reprimands, ostracism, or loss of trust from neighbors have a significant reinforcing effect on compliance with applicable rules (El-Khattabi, 2023). Communities also function as spaces for individuals to learn from the experiences of others through observation and discussion about the consequences of various behaviors. Collective activities such as community service, religious events, and cultural celebrations strengthen social bonds and the sense of belonging that forms the basis of commitment to shared values. Dynamic communities are able to respond to social changes by updating norms without losing the essence of the underlying moral values. Strengthening community capacity in carrying out its socialization function is an important investment for the development of internal legal awareness.

Mature internal legal awareness not only results in compliance with existing rules, but also encourages active participation in the improvement of the legal system and public oversight of its enforcement. Individuals with internal legal awareness are not satisfied with passive compliance, but rather engage in efforts to criticize unjust policies and fight for change toward a better direction. This participation reflects the post-conventional stage of moral development where individuals evaluate laws

based on universal principles of justice and human rights. Societies whose citizens possess a high level of legal awareness will have more effective social control over state administrators and law enforcement officers. This creates a positive cycle in which laws become more responsive to community needs, and the public increasingly trusts and obeys the law. Sustainable legal compliance cannot be separated from the existence of a just legal system and its legitimacy in the eyes of society. Internal legal awareness encourages citizens to become guardians for the upholding of justice, rather than merely objects regulated by the law.

### **Stability of Internal Moral-Based Legal Compliance versus External Sanction-Based Compliance**

Legal compliance driven by the threat of external sanctions possesses characteristics that are fundamentally different from compliance born of internal moral awareness. External compliance is instrumental and conditional, meaning individuals obey the law because they calculate the risk of being caught and the magnitude of the punishment they might receive. When this calculation changes, for example when supervision weakens or sanctions are perceived as too light, obedient behavior can quickly turn into violation. This phenomenon explains why rates of law violation often increase when law enforcement officers are busy with other matters or when there are loopholes that allow violations without detection. External compliance also tends to be situational, where individuals may comply in one place but violate in another depending on their perception of the likelihood of enforcement (Abdulaeva & Rasulov, 2025). This compliance model requires continuous and expensive monitoring costs to maintain the desired level of compliance. The limited resources of law enforcement make this approach impossible to implement comprehensively in all aspects of community life. Therefore, relying solely on external sanctions is an unsustainable strategy for building long-term social order.

Internal moral-based legal compliance demonstrates much higher stability because the source of behavioral control resides within the individual, rather than in the external environment. Individuals with mature internal moral awareness will continue to obey the law even in situations where violations can be committed without the risk of being caught. The guilt that arises when violating the law functions as an automatic self-control mechanism and requires no external oversight. This guilt is not merely a fear of social consequences, but rather a feeling of

discomfort that arises because an action contradicts values that have become part of one's identity. Internal compliance is also general, meaning individuals tend to comply with various types of rules, not just rules with strict supervision (Hirtenlehner, 2022). This occurs because compliance is based on universal moral principles, not on pragmatic considerations regarding a particular rule. The stability of internal compliance is reflected in the consistency of individual behavior over time and across different situations. Moral-based compliance is an investment that yields long-term benefits for societal order.

External compliance based on fear of sanctions tends to trigger avoidance and manipulative behavior rather than genuine obedience to the law. Individuals under an external compliance regime will seek ways to evade detection or manipulate the system so that violations remain unproven. This pattern is visible, for example, in cases where business actors default on house sale-purchase agreements, seeking to evade their contractual obligations rather than fulfilling them in good faith (Aryanto et al., 2023). Creativity that should be directed toward progress is often redirected toward finding legal loopholes and clever ways to violate rules without incurring sanctions. This phenomenon is known as the substitution effect, in which an individual's energy is drained avoiding punishment rather than building constructive behavior. In the long run, external compliance can undermine intrinsic motivation because external rewards and punishments shift behavioral orientation from values to incentives. Individuals may lose the ability to distinguish right from wrong morally because they become too focused on calculating legal costs and benefits (Mulder, 2018). Prolonged external compliance can also cause psychological fatigue and resistance, as individuals feel controlled by forces outside themselves. As a result, external compliance is not only ineffective in the long term but also potentially damaging to whatever moral awareness may have already formed.

Compliance grounded in internal morality contributes to a more orderly and harmonious society without requiring extensive supervision. When the majority of citizens possess mature internal legal awareness, the function of social control can operate in a decentralized and efficient manner. Individuals in such a society remind one another without needing to involve law enforcement officers, and social norms are maintained through voluntary, reciprocal mechanisms. This is reflected in the growing use of restorative approaches to resolve speech-related disputes in digital spaces, which rely on voluntary reconciliation between parties rather

than strict formal prosecution (Darmawan & Negara, 2023). Trust among citizens increases because everyone can rely on others' commitment to shared values. This trust becomes valuable social capital for various forms of cooperation and collective action that advance social welfare. Social transaction costs decrease because complicated contracts or guarantees are no longer needed to ensure that each party honors an agreement. A society with high internal compliance is also more resilient to crisis, since deeply embedded moral values are not easily eroded by situational pressure. Investment in building internal legal awareness carries a significant multiplier effect on the overall quality of social life.

External and internal compliance are not absolutely dichotomous but exist on a spectrum, with most individuals positioned somewhere between the two poles. Most people combine internal and external motivations in their compliance with the law, in proportions that vary depending on the type of rule and situation. Individuals with developing morality may need the support of external sanctions as a temporary scaffold until their internal values are mature enough. Appropriate policy interventions can help shift the balance from external toward internal compliance by creating an environment that supports value internalization. This need for balance is reflected in the practice of traditional mediation as an alternative avenue for resolving inheritance disputes, which allows communities to reach outcomes considered fair without relying solely on formal litigation (Futriyah et al., 2023). Policies that are overly repressive and neglect moral education can hinder the development of internal compliance in individuals (Lewinsohn-Zamir, 2015). Understanding this spectrum is important for formulating law enforcement policy that balances repressive and preventive approaches. An ideal policy is one that allows room for moral awareness to grow while still maintaining legal certainty through proportional sanctions. With a balanced approach, external compliance can function as a temporary safety net while building the foundation for long-term internal compliance.

The moral development process toward internal compliance requires an environment that fosters autonomy and reflection, not merely blind obedience to authority. Individuals need the opportunity to understand the reasoning behind rules and to explore the moral implications of compliance or violation. An environment that supports moral autonomy provides a safe space for individuals to ask questions, question existing norms, and reach deeper understanding. This kind of space is closely

tied to how freedom of expression is framed within a democratic legal system, where the boundary against hate speech is drawn not to silence questioning but to keep such questioning within limits that respect others (Udjari et al., 2022). A dialogic and participatory approach to moral education is more effective in developing moral reasoning than a dogmatic, indoctrinating approach. Individuals who reach moral understanding independently will have a stronger commitment to the values they have internalized. Imposing values from outside without room for reflection tends to produce superficial compliance that easily fades. Environmental support for moral autonomy is important at every stage of development, from childhood to adulthood. Building internal compliance requires transforming the approach to socialization from authoritarian toward democratic and reflective.

Legal compliance grounded in internal morality has the capacity to endure amid rapid social change, since internalized moral values are more fundamental than any specific legal rule. When the law changes with the times, individuals with internal moral awareness can adjust their behavior quickly because they understand the moral purpose behind the regulation. Core values such as justice, honesty, and concern for others remain relevant even as the form of legal implementation changes. Individuals with mature moral orientation have the capacity to distinguish between the essence of the law and its formalities, so their compliance is not confined to a narrow, literal interpretation (Wang, 2022). This gap between the letter and the spirit of the law is also apparent in the reluctance of copyright holders to file civil lawsuits despite having valid legal grounds, suggesting that formal legal avenues alone do not always capture how rights are actually upheld in practice (Hardyansah et al., 2021). This adaptive capacity is crucial in modern society, which experiences continuous regulatory change in response to social and technological development. Internal compliance also enables individuals to obey the spirit of the law, not merely its letter, when a situation is not explicitly covered by existing regulations. Internal moral awareness provides a flexibility in compliance that rigid external compliance, dependent on the specific formulation of rules, does not possess.

The difference in stability between internal and external compliance is also reflected in resistance to temptation and pressure from the social environment. Individuals with internal compliance possess moral principles that function as a psychological shield against various negative influences pushing toward legal violation. Peer



pressure to do wrong, the temptation of financial gain from corrupt practices, or emergency situations that push rule-breaking can be resisted through firm internal conviction. This capacity to withstand external pressure while preserving core principles resembles how the ability to adapt is what determines resilience amid the pressures of broader change (Abdullah et al., 2021). Individuals who rely solely on external compliance will more easily give in to pressure and temptation when they believe they will not be caught (Larcom et al., 2019). Individual character differences also help explain why some people remain more consistent in maintaining ethical behavior under pressure than others (Darmawan, 2017). Resistance to temptation is especially important in situations where legal violation offers substantial gain with low risk of detection, such as in cases of corruption or bribery. Individuals with internal moral awareness have the capacity to forgo short-term gain in order to preserve their integrity and consistency with the values they hold. Internal compliance also helps individuals maintain ethical behavior in situations where rules are unclear or ambiguous. Internal moral awareness functions as an inner compass guiding individuals through various situations that test the integrity of legal compliance.

Legal compliance grounded in internal morality has a positive effect on individual psychological wellbeing because it does not involve conflict between behavior and belief that can cause stress. Individuals who comply out of internal conviction experience satisfaction and pride in the consistency between their values and actions, which supports mental health and self-esteem. Forced external compliance is often accompanied by feelings of pressure, unfairness, and psychological discomfort that can disrupt individual wellbeing (Gao & Qian, 2025). This is comparable to findings showing that consistency and commitment rooted in genuine conviction provide far greater psychological stability than performance driven merely by obligation (Darmawan et al., 2020). Guilt and regret arising from behavior that contradicts one's moral beliefs can become a source of chronic stress affecting both physical and mental health. Individuals with internal compliance are also better able to manage moral dilemmas because they possess a clear value framework to guide their decision-making. The moral certainty they hold reduces anxiety when facing complex situations, since individuals have a firm basis for determining the right course of action. Relationships between individuals also become healthier because trust is built on a foundation of reliable integrity rather than fear of supervision.

Internal compliance benefits not only society but also the wellbeing of the individual.

Building internal compliance requires more time and patience than a repressive law enforcement approach, yet the results are far more permanent and efficient. The process of moral value internalization cannot be forced instantly but requires a consistent accumulation of experience and reflection over time. Family, school, and the wider social environment need to work together on an ongoing basis to create conditions conducive to a child's moral development. The results of this process only become visible in the long term, once an individual reaches the moral maturity that enables autonomous compliance (Larcom et al., 2019). This gradual outcome is consistent with the view that sustainable effectiveness generally results from several reinforcing factors working together rather than from a single intervention (Darmawan, 2024). Social institutions need to shift their orientation from merely producing external compliance toward building sustainable internal moral awareness. Managing this kind of gradual transition calls for an adaptive approach, much like the situational strategies used to guide change processes toward better long-term outcomes (Mardikaningsih & Darmawan, 2022). An overly rushed and pragmatic approach often neglects this essential aspect of moral development. Genuine commitment of this kind is generally built cumulatively, shaped by sustained positive experience rather than by a single policy or event (Eddine et al., 2023). Investment in character education at every level is a form of long-term investment that will yield multiplied returns in the form of better social order. Short-sighted public policy often gets trapped in quick repressive fixes without attending to the fundamental development of citizens' legal awareness.

Internal compliance formed through the internalization of moral values has a deeper and more authentic quality than compliance forced through the threat of sanctions. The authenticity of internal compliance is reflected in the alignment between words and actions, between stated beliefs and actual conduct. Individuals with internal compliance do not need to display compliant behavior as a mask for public appearance; instead, compliance arises naturally as an expression of self-identity (Shavell, 2002). This authenticity lends individuals high credibility in the eyes of others and builds genuine trust in social relationships. Authentic compliance is also more stable because it does not require significant mental effort to maintain consistency between public and private behavior. Individuals with internal compliance do not experience the personality dualism often seen in

those who merely display compliance in public while violating rules in private. This quality of authentic compliance forms the foundation for a transparent, honest, and reliable society. The presence of individuals with authentic compliance in society creates an environment that supports the growth of legal awareness in future generations through positive example and social influence.

The fundamental difference between internal and external compliance has important implications for strategies to build legal awareness in society. Approaches that rely solely on law enforcement and sanctions need to be complemented by systematic and sustainable moral education strategies. Educational system reform needs to incorporate character education as a core component integrated across all subjects, rather than merely as an additional extracurricular activity. Family strengthening and community empowerment programs also need to be enhanced to maximize the roles of traditional socialization agents. Public policies must provide incentives for social practices that support the internalization of moral values, rather than merely punishing violations. Civil society and religious organizations need to be actively involved in efforts to build value-based legal awareness. An integrated legal development approach combining repressive, preventive, and cultural aspects will produce a better and more sustainable level of compliance.

## CONCLUSION

The internalization of moral values through socialization within the family, school, and community serves as the foundation for the formation of internal legal awareness, which becomes a stable and sustainable source of legal compliance. The internalization process takes place gradually along with an individual's cognitive development, beginning from the imitation of parental behavior to the achievement of post-conventional moral reasoning capable of considering universal principles of justice. Internal legal awareness formed through this process possesses a quality that is fundamentally different from compliance driven by the fear of external sanctions. Internal moral-based compliance is autonomous, consistent across situations, resistant to temptation, adaptive to social change, and contributes positively to an individual's psychological well-being. External compliance that relies on the threat of sanctions is conditional, vulnerable, costly, and has the potential to undermine intrinsic moral motivation. The three socialization agents family, school, and community play complementary roles and require close coordination for the internalization process to run effectively. The

success of moral value internalization is heavily determined by consistency between what is taught and what is practiced by these three socialization agents. Social change and technological development present new challenges that demand the adaptation of socialization methods without sacrificing the essence of the moral values intended to be instilled. The construction of sustainable legal compliance requires an integrated approach that combines law enforcement with moral education and the strengthening of socialization agent functions.

The educational system needs to reform its curriculum to make character education a core component integrated across subjects, rather than merely an additional extracurricular activity. Teachers and educators need to be provided with adequate training on effective moral teaching methods, including dialogic approaches and case studies that stimulate high-level moral reasoning. Family strengthening programs through value-based parenting counseling and support for parents in carrying out their socialization roles must become a priority in social policy. Local communities need to be empowered through programs that strengthen social cohesion and collective norms supporting value-based legal compliance. Law enforcement institutions need to adopt approaches that are not only repressive but also preventive and educational, by involving the public in efforts to build legal awareness. Public policies need to provide incentives for social practices that support the internalization of moral values, including recognition for families, schools, and communities that successfully instill moral values in the younger generation. Cross-sector cooperation among the ministries of education, social affairs, religion, and law is necessary to create an ecosystem that supports the development of comprehensive and sustainable internal legal awareness.

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