

Study of Public Legal Awareness Regarding the Phenomenon of Infidelity (Case Study of Sawahan District, Nganjuk Regency)

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Abstract. *The phenomenon of infidelity in the background is due to a shift in social values, where once disgraceful behavior is now characterized by family breakdown and psychological disorder. Infidelity is clearly contrary to the purposes of marriage, banned by Islamic law, tribal law, and positive law, but lack of compliance and law enforcement causes a weakening of public consciousness in various walks of life. The study aims to explore public legal awareness, identifying the practice of infidelity in shaping public legal awareness of the effects of infidelity in the incom-lined district district. The study is an empirical legal study with a naturalistic and interpretive qualitative approach (verstehen) in a sociological and legal perspective, which is aimed at understanding legal awareness and behavior of society through a descriptive data of field observations, social interaction, and interpretation of the meaning of action without prejudice. The study learned that public legal awareness of indiscretion on the part of infidelity was low because it was better understood as a moral and social matter than as breaking the law, and it tended to be adopted as a family. It is influenced by economic, psychological, communication, social media, and a lack of legal understanding and has a serious impact on individuals, families, and social beliefs. Therefore, strengthening the integration of social and legal norms of Islamic law is necessary to increase awareness of the law and preserve the moral order of society.*

Keywords: *Infidelity; Legal Awareness; Society.*

1. Introduction

Infidelity has become a fascinating phenomenon to study in legal, social, cultural, and psychological contexts. Similarly, gambling was once considered highly forbidden and shameful if others found out about it. However, this is now commonplace, and society's perception of gambling has become more normalized due to the advent of online gambling (Kartini, 2007) .

The essence of marriage, according to Sudarsono, is to build a harmonious family, sakinah mawadah, so that husband and wife are obliged to help and perfect, so that each husband/wife can cultivate their character to help until they achieve spiritual and material

success. (Sudarsono, 2010) . This impact is very bad for the household. Salman As-Syakiri in his book discusses third parties as an affair, this legal term is used for other people at that time who are involved in a relationship, it is also explained that other people or third parties are someone who has a relationship with the wife or husband because of a marriage relationship, for example, such as children. (Malik Masrurotin, 2008)

Research in America involving more than 2,000 respondents found that the phenomenon of infidelity is a problem in marriage that cannot be ignored because its presence is always present and is a cause of divorce. (Amato, 1997) . Infidelity itself is divided into two, including those that use feelings and those that only use lust to fulfill biological needs. (Whitty, MT, & Quigley, 2008) Infidelity that occurs either using feelings or lust is called a mistake in loyalty and indicates a lack of loyalty or strong commitment to the relationship. (Thornton & Nagurney, 2011)

The current phenomenon of couples making infidelity easy is widespread. (Wijayanto et al., 2021) This is especially true in Sawahan District, Nganjuk Regency. Social media, representation in popular culture, and shifting gender norms have contributed to the formation of more complex views regarding infidelity. Initial observations suggest that some individuals now view infidelity not only as a betrayal but also as a result of broader relationship dynamics, such as poor communication or emotional dissatisfaction. The phenomenon of infidelity occurring in Sawahan District, Nganjuk Regency, has had a significant impact on the families of the victims, particularly those who often experience various types of mental health problems, including psychological/emotional problems, such as depression, anxiety, lack of self-confidence (PD), sexual relations, and loss of self-esteem. (M et al., 2007) In this context, infidelity is considered by society to be an indication of a lack of harmony in a marriage and an unhealthy household. (H, 1985)

The purpose of this research is to explore the level of legal awareness of the community towards the phenomenon of infidelity in Sawahan District, Nganjuk Regency. To identify the causes of the level of legal awareness of the community in Sawahan District, Nganjuk Regency. To analyze the impact on the level of legal awareness in Sawahan District.

2. Research Methods

The approach of this research is qualitative research. This research focuses on its location in Sawahan District, Nganjuk Regency, East Java. This research identifies informants, namely the people of Sawahan District which consists of 9 (nine) villages. Each village will be sampled with several people. The sample consists of Bareng Village which was interviewed by 2 people, Margopatut Village by 2 people, Duren Village by 5 people, Sawahan Village by 1 person, Ngliman Village by 1 person, Bendolo Village by 2 people, Siwalan Village by 2 people, Sidoarjo Village by 1 person, and Kebonagung Village by 2 people. This data collection is a sample from observations conducted by the author from late 2023 to early 2025. Data Collection Methods are Observation, Interviews, and Documentation. Data Analysis uses Data Reduction, Data Presentation, and Conclusion Drawing.

3. Results and Discussion

Result

A. The Phenomenon of Infidelity in Sawahan District

The advancement of technology, coupled with the widespread and excessive use of social media, from children to adults, has brought with it various implications. One such implication is the widespread phenomenon of infidelity on social media. It turns out this phenomenon isn't limited to social media; it's also deeply intertwined with the social life of society, particularly in the Sawahan District. The forms of infidelity include:

a. Digital Infidelity

Infidelity generally begins with social activities and progresses to intense communication via mobile phone via social media. This can be seen in Facebook (FB) social media groups, which demonstrate the high number of Facebook users in Sawahan District.

Based on observations, one of the objects of study being Facebook groups, it is known that the majority of members are residents of Sawahan District who have social media accounts, which implicitly indicates mobile phone ownership. Mobile phone ownership and access to social media are significant factors in the dynamics of interpersonal relationships in the digital age, including in the context of infidelity.

Based on observations and interviews with one of the residents in Sawahan District, they started a relationship with their neighbors using the *inbox feature*. Fb. Freedom of Mobile Access Every time and place presents an opportunity to support this illicit relationship. This practice persists because the perpetrator himself has a way to keep his actions hidden from his wife, as explained in the following interview:

b. Emotional Infidelity

An emotional affair occurs when someone forms a deep emotional bond with another person outside their primary relationship. This bond often develops through intense conversations, emotional outpourings, and constant attention. (Sprecher, 2002)

Based on observations, it can be concluded that women generally establish household relationships with a strong emotional foundation and deep emotional attachment. When these needs *for affection* and attention are not met in their relationships with their partners, some may feel compelled to seek emotional fulfillment outside of marriage in response to the psychological emptiness they feel.

Based on these observations, it can be seen that the respondents engaged in this illicit relationship due to unmet emotional needs. The respondents felt that they did not receive this attention from their father. The father figure plays an important role because the loss of a father figure can affect self-confidence and the ability to establish

healthy relationships. The impact of this causes a desire to have a partner for recognition, a feeling of protection, and a need for excessive affection due to the lack of a father figure. This has the potential to make the child become a third party. (Ellis et al., 2009)

c. Physical or Sexual Infidelity

The phenomenon of infidelity has become a way to increase financial gain. Because people living in rural areas generally have lower-middle incomes, they need additional income to support their lives. In the dynamics of transactional infidelity, a *give-and-take pattern often occurs* between both parties. A man who provides financial support often acts not solely out of altruism, but also to fulfill emotional and psychological needs, such as feelings of appreciation, dominance, or intimacy. Conversely, the woman who receives such support may also respond by providing emotional closeness or affection as part of a non-explicit reciprocal relationship. This activity is considered quite common, especially among the people of Bomo Hamlet, Sawahan District, who work as farmers or farm laborers.

Based on the results of these interviews and observations, it is clear that physical and even sexual infidelity has become commonplace in society. The prevalence of infidelity has increased significantly, making this phenomenon more open and commonly discussed in various circles, no longer limited to individual cases or specific groups.

d. Micro Cheating

Based on observations, *micro-cheating* is an early sign of infidelity. Avoiding your partner's presence and hiding messages with others are signs of interest in a third party. Furthermore, keeping your partner's messages secret indicates flirting, soliciting, or even infidelity.

This method of infidelity involving unauthorized parties still occurs in society. Using close friends to assist in the affair in exchange for material rewards makes it easier and more flexible for the perpetrator to carry out their actions, without fear of their partner finding out.

B. General Pattern of Events

Data from observations that have been collected by researchers in the form of observations and several interviews with a total of 40 informants consisting of 11 perpetrators of infidelity who can be interviewed and 8 community leaders/general public as samples regarding the community's views regarding the phenomenon of infidelity and the remaining 21 are perpetrators of infidelity who can only be observed without interviews.

The conclusion from the observations conducted found that in everyday social life, society's view of infidelity is not only a matter of right or wrong, but also greatly influenced by who does it, the social relationships around them, and the extent of the influence of prevailing norms in that environment. In reality, many people in society view infidelity as a personal matter, not a shared concern. However, there are some regions that consider infidelity to be a shared responsibility and require sanctions against perpetrators. Based on the results of the observations, the interview results can be mapped into several sections:

1. Affair A person who has high social status and education

Some regions believe that everyone is responsible for their own sins, and therefore do not feel they have the right to interfere in other people's household affairs. Furthermore, if the perpetrator of the affair is a friend, a close neighbor, or someone socially respected, feelings of unease arise, for fear of damaging the friendship. This behavior shows how the value of social harmony is often prioritized over the courage to speak the truth and uphold it. This silence from the community does not mean they condone the act of infidelity, but rather because they are in a difficult situation. They know that the act is wrong, but worry that speaking the truth will be seen as too intrusive, spreading shame, or even causing the breakdown of the friendship. This is a form of social dilemma, where society is caught between maintaining moral values and maintaining social relationships.

Interviews with several people in Sawahan District revealed that infidelity is considered commonplace, and some even tend to cover it up, claiming they don't want to interfere because the perpetrator is a friend. Some also consider the phenomenon normal because the environment supports and normalizes it.

2. The View of Infidelity of Someone with Low Social Status and Middle Education

Not all communities are passive. In some communities, especially those that still uphold communal and religious values, there is the courage to take a firm stance. They don't hesitate to issue a direct reprimand, even conveying it to the perpetrator's legal partner. In some cases, social sanctions also emerge, such as subtle ostracism, whispers behind their backs, and even negative views attached to the perpetrator of the affair. This is a form of informal social control, which, although unwritten, still exerts a

powerful pressure to maintain norms. Generally, people with lower levels of education, such as elementary, middle, and high school, tend to be more harsh in their response to infidelity.

Based on the respondents' statements, it can be seen that public legal awareness can be influenced by several factors, including education, background, and environment. This means that when someone with a lower educational background is caught committing an affair, they tend to be processed more quickly socially and legally. This is because society generally feels less hesitant to directly reprimand or impose sanctions on perpetrators with lower social and educational status. This situation suggests that public legal awareness tends to already exist and even increases when the perpetrator of the affair has a lower social status.

Discussion

A. Analysis of the Overview of Public Legal Awareness of Infidelity

Infidelity is a common phenomenon within families and a major trigger for family problems. Infidelity is typically characterized by changes in behavior, such as keeping secrets from their partner. Infidelity is a condition in which a person has a special relationship with someone other than their partner.

1. Law Enforcement in Infidelity Cases

a. Philosophical Basis of Public Legal Awareness of the Phenomenon of Infidelity

Society becomes a unified whole, interconnected and connected in terms of attitudes, habits, feelings, and *culture*. Society becomes a force for realizing the nation's ideals through its legal awareness. Infidelity has tarnished the first principle, namely the belief in the one and only God. In this regard, no God in any religion legalizes infidelity. It is clear that infidelity damages the dignity of the one and only God. This philosophical foundation is a logical consequence of the first principle, which prohibits all acts prohibited by God through each religion, which society deems correct. (Annafikarno & Alfarizy, 2019)

b. Legal Basis for Public Legal Awareness of the Phenomenon of Infidelity

The legal scope and sanctions for adultery can only be applied if the affair is reported by the legal husband/wife. Both the old Criminal Code and Articles 411 and 412 of the new Criminal Code apply the nature of the offense as a complaint offense. The difference in the New Criminal Code is an additional clause that previously only allowed the legal husband/wife to report the affair to the executive branch. However, this law still has loopholes because not all family members who have the right dare to report it. In fact, some families are unaware of the adultery being committed because

it is carried out secretly. This can be seen based on the author's observations, where this is one of the causes of the rampant adultery in Sawahan District.

Based on this legal basis, it can be concluded that infidelity is a criminal offense within the household. This prohibition is clear and has strict sanctions, in addition, this prohibition is also based on the nation's philosophical values which are based on the one almighty God. No religion that believes in God legalizes infidelity because it is a form of treason and adultery. This can be seen in the teachings of Christianity found in Matthew 19:6, Mark 10:6-8, and Hebrews 13:4-5 as the legal basis for the prohibition of infidelity. (Sitompul, 2024) Hinduism also regulates this in the original Vedas which emphasize ethics because of the reward in heaven and its connection to rebirth according to the karma obtained. (Diastini, 2019) . Buddhism in the Dhammapada is prohibited from indulging in lust and greed because it damages the mind, in this case, infidelity becomes a path to lust and greed which are prohibited in this religious teaching. Similarly, Confucianism is based on commitment and morality, as well as the sacred duty of marriage to develop life and nurture offspring, which causes infidelity to be considered a deviation from these values. (Kristanti, 2010)

c. Sociological Basis of Public Legal Awareness of the Phenomenon of Infidelity

The phenomenon of infidelity cannot be separated from a sociological perspective, because, from any perspective, cheating violates sociological principles. This can be seen from the meaning of the sociological principles themselves, which are used as the basic foundations for considerations centered on social reality in society, with the aim of understanding rules, systems, and even phenomena. (Soekanto, 2012) This sociological principle relates to community life, social behavior, patterns of social relationships, social interactions, and everyday culture that influence the process of infidelity in Sawahan District. (Ehrlich, 2002)

A sociological perspective views the phenomenon of infidelity as deviant behavior because it violates values and norms, such as denying the commitment to emotional exclusivity, both physical and spiritual, within the bonds of marriage (Mariah et al., 2020) . The sociological basis examines the societal response, in the form of actions taken when infidelity occurs. This response is influenced by several key factors, namely, first, social values and norms. Infidelity, in this case, is closely related to the collective morality of a society, related to the actions taken by society towards infidelity. It is known that in Sawahan District there are no written regulations or appeals from community leaders regarding infidelity. Based on observations, the community's response itself is largely indifferent and tends to be indifferent. Only a handful of villages understand the importance of fidelity in the household, as evidenced by observations in two villages: Kebonagung Village and Ngliman Village. Both villages implement sanctions in the form of a community response to cases of infidelity. Social norms are closely related to the severity of sanctions imposed by society on those who commit adultery, whether in the form of criticism, insults, or

formal sanctions imposed by society itself, as they relate to societal beliefs regarding the goodness or badness of such actions. (Soekanto, 2012a)

Second, social control and community sanctions for those who commit adultery. They often receive social sanctions in the form of criticism, insults, or ostracism, and even worse, customary sanctions, which are collective agreements from the community for violating collective morality.

Third, public legal awareness is also influenced by local culture and views regarding marriage and commitment. Infidelity is considered wrong due to strong cultural norms, such as in Kebonagung and Ngliman villages, which still consider it wrong. This does not mean that infidelity is acceptable in one sub-district; rather, the level of tolerance in several other villages has increased. Excessive and increasing tolerance for infidelity leads to a culture of tolerance and infidelity becoming normal over time. Despite its mountainous location in Sawahan sub-district, progress in information and communication technology has been rapid. This has led to a more apathetic and tolerant attitude toward others' mistakes, such as infidelity, as people perceive it as no longer within their realm. Change will always occur in life, and traditional values will always be replaced by new ones. (Raho, 2007)

Lastly, the role of community leaders and local values, which should be able to be used as handling and prevention efforts, are no longer relevant to be implemented in Sawahan District.

2. Factors Influencing Legal Awareness in Society

Legal awareness is an attitude or values that exist in humans regarding existing laws or about laws that are expected to exist regarding the functions of legal values objectively. (Soekanto, 2002) The legal awareness that society has does not guarantee that a legal rule will be obeyed. In this attitude of legal awareness, it will give rise to conflicts between the interests of each human being.

Based on these factors, the author will formulate a form of analytical pattern identification that describes the infidelity that occurred in Sawahan District. Some of these analytical patterns can be described as follows:

- a. High Dominant Legal Understanding
- b. Moderate Understanding of Law
- c. Low Legal Understanding

B. Analysis of the Causes of the Phenomenon of Infidelity

The factors that cause infidelity are differentiated between the causes and the reasons. Referring to the reasons for infidelity itself, it refers to Government Regulation Number 9

of 1975, while the reasons for divorce itself according to the Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI) are found in Article 116, namely if one party commits adultery and there are continuous disputes and quarrels between the husband and wife and there is no hope of living in harmony again in the household.

Several factors underlying people in Sawahan District's infidelity include a lack of communication with their partners, emotional dissatisfaction, and environmental and social factors. Furthermore, close friends can also influence infidelity in Sawahan District. The influence of close friends can actually encourage someone to engage in infidelity.

From the perspective of Soerjono Soekanto's legal awareness, these factors play a role in shaping the level of legal compliance in society, including:

1. Causes From Individuals (Internal)

Individuals with low levels of education or those with a strong emotional orientation tend to have a poor understanding of legal values. They are driven more by psychological or emotional needs than by legal rationality. This indicates a lack of legal awareness through formal or moral education. The causes of this are personal/individual, and include several factors, including:

- a. There is Emotional Dissatisfaction

In a relationship, it's crucial to respect each other's feelings. Feeling underappreciated by your partner can lead to infidelity.

This aligns with Abraham Maslow's *Unmet Needs Theory*. The concept is that infidelity occurs when emotional, sexual, or psychological needs are not met within the primary relationship. When someone feels neglected, unappreciated, or deprived of the affection they expect from their partner, they tend to seek fulfillment outside the relationship. For example, a lack of communication and emotional intimacy can trigger someone to seek attention from others. (Maslow, 2015)

- b. Lack of Communication Between Couples

Another cause of infidelity in Sawahan District is a lack of communication between partners. Communication is the most important and key aspect of any relationship, especially between husband and wife. Without open and honest communication about feelings and thoughts, a person can feel neglected by their partner, leading them to seek their partner's attention.

This aligns with Marital Dissatisfaction Theory. The concept is that infidelity often arises from low marital satisfaction, both emotionally and sexually. Relationships full of conflict, lack of communication, and a lack of sexual satisfaction can drive individuals to seek comfort outside the marriage. (F & S, 2010)

2. Causes of Socio-Cultural

A permissive social environment toward infidelity means that such behavior is no longer considered a serious offense. According to Soerjono Soekanto, if social norms are no longer adhered to and there are no firm social sanctions, the social control function of the law is weakened. Furthermore, the increasing use of social media is also a trigger and supporter of this infidelity phenomenon.

Couples often engage in infidelity because their emotional needs are unmet, especially for women. Furthermore, lack of attention from their partner, loneliness, and a strong need for attention are other factors that trigger infidelity. Opportunities for infidelity arise when people have easy access to the opposite sex at work and various resources that support infidelity, including social media. Freedom of access to cell phones is also a factor. every time and place also becomes an opportunity to support this forbidden relationship.¹

3. Economic Causes

Economic pressures cause stress and marital conflict, which can then trigger infidelity. In situations like this, people often focus more on meeting their basic needs than on complying with legal norms. As a result, legal values are no longer a priority in daily behavior. Observations indicate that many people engage in infidelity due to financial constraints.

4. Causes from the Environment (Friends and Work)

When the workplace or friendship environment is permissive of infidelity, legal values lose their authority as a tool for shaping behavior. This aligns with Soerjono Soekanto's view that legal awareness is influenced by social interactions and the legal culture surrounding an individual.

Based on observations and interviews, infidelity can originate from environmental and social settings, such as within a friendship. Friendships can be a trigger or the starting point for someone to engage in infidelity, possibly because the perpetrator receives support from their friends.

This aligns with the Opportunity Theory, which states that infidelity can occur when individuals have more opportunities, such as frequent travel, working out of town, or interacting with the opposite sex, and the environment is conducive to infidelity. High opportunities not balanced with self-control or strong moral values increase the risk of infidelity. (D & D, 2012)

¹ *ibid*

5. Level of education

Education level appears to play a role in shaping public perceptions of legal aspects. Residents of Sawahan District with higher education tend to have better legal awareness and understand that infidelity is not only a matter of ethics or morality but can also have legal consequences. Conversely, respondents with lower education often view infidelity as a personal or domestic issue best resolved through family channels, deliberation, or traditional approaches, without involving formal legal mechanisms.

Based on the data presented, it is known that many cases of infidelity occur among high school graduates. Husbands or wives who cheat on their partners tend to lie more. Unfulfilled expectations in marriage are the beginning of a person's behavior, leading to betrayal by cheating.

C. The Impact of Infidelity in Influencing the Level of Legal Awareness in Society

Conceptually, the impacts of infidelity can be categorized into two broad categories: the impact on the individual and family, and the impact on the social environment. For both individuals and families, the consequences can be both negative and positive. Negative impacts include psychological disorders such as stress, depression, decreased self-esteem, and disruption of emotional stability within the family. Infidelity can also trigger disharmony between partners, reduce the quality of communication, and create emotional distance between husband, wife, and children.

However, in certain cases, positive impacts can emerge as a form of learning or self-reflection. For example, couples can use the event as an opportunity for introspection, improving communication, and reinvigorating awareness of the importance of loyalty and commitment in a marital relationship.

Meanwhile, at the social level, infidelity can have broader social impacts, such as the emergence of negative stigma within society, a decline in the family's moral image, and disruption of harmony within the social environment. In certain contexts, infidelity can also influence societal views on the values of loyalty, responsibility, and family honor.

1. Impact on individuals and families

These impact categories can be explained as follows:

a. The Destructive Implications of Infidelity

For couples who decide to stay married, the negative impact of infidelity is felt most acutely by the partner who is cheated on. As the betrayed party, they experience intense negative emotions and often experience prolonged depression (Dusturia & Suprapti, 2017) . The profound hurt makes them extremely angry, lacking in enthusiasm for life, and lacking in self-confidence, especially in the early stages after the affair is revealed. They experience conflict between remaining in the marriage

because they still love their husband and children, and wanting to divorce immediately because their husband's actions have violated the main principles of their marriage. (Ginanjar, 2009)

b. Taking an Emotional Approach

Psychologically, victims who are repeatedly trapped as victims of infidelity are at risk of experiencing mental disorders such as stress and depression. (Dusturia & Suprapti, 2017) This approach can be implemented through counseling with a psychologist, emotional therapy, or joining a support group. This is important because infidelity often causes stress, depression, and even anxiety disorders in victims. (D, 2020) With professional help, victims can think logically by identifying their feelings, which can help them recover mentally over time. (Hatta, 2016)

c. Dare to Take Communicative Steps with Your Partner

Before taking further action, victims need to communicate openly, calmly, and rationally with their partners to clarify the motives for the affair and determine the potential for reconciliation. This is crucial to prevent conflict escalation, maintain rationality and control, and serve as a first step before making more significant decisions, preventing the existing turmoil from escalating. Based on interpersonal communication theory, open and honest conversations can lay the foundation for conflict resolution and help couples understand the root causes of problems in their relationship.

d. Considering Legal Assistance

If an act of adultery is proven to have exceeded legal limits, the injured party has the right to take legal action to protect their rights. This violation violates the provisions of Article 19 letter (d) of Government Regulation No. 9 of 1974, which stipulates that violation of a husband's or wife's fidelity is one of the legal grounds that can be used in a divorce petition in court. Similarly, in communication between partners, the law serves as a social tool to facilitate social interaction. (Soekanto, 2012a)

In practice, legal assistance is provided informally. Legal assistance has been considered through simple court proceedings led by community leaders. The implications are limited to a warning, and at most, administrative sanctions, such as a fine, are imposed upon an agreed-upon amount. However, the decision is ultimately left to the victim or their family. (M, Observation, 19 Januari 2024)

e. Giving Psychological Trauma

The victim is the most crucial party because they feel pressured and betrayed. They must face anger, irritation, hurt, sadness, disappointment, and other feelings all at once. It can be very difficult to calm down when faced with a partner who is caught cheating. Infidelity can have a significant impact on the victim, such as depression, moodiness,

inability to control themselves and their emotions, and becoming irritable. Behavioral changes can also occur after someone is cheated on, such as becoming violent. Mrs. B, a victim of persistent infidelity by her husband, experienced psychological trauma. (B, Interview, Sawahan 1 September 2025)

f. Vulnerable to HIV/AIDS

The most dangerous negative impact of infidelity is the risk of contracting the dangerous infectious disease, HIV/AIDS. This not only affects the person engaging in infidelity and changing partners, but it can also endanger the family. The person can transmit the disease to those closest to them. Observations have revealed that in Sawahan District, there are HIV/AIDS victims who have died. The victims were identified as the perpetrators of the infidelity, while several others were the wives of the perpetrators. (S, Interview, Sawahan, 1 Sept 2025)

6. Impact on Social Society

In general, the forms of social sanctions received in Sawahan District include:

a. Loss of Trust

This impact is felt by all parties, both the perpetrator and the victim. From the victim's perspective, wives, children, and families tend to lose trust in the perpetrator of the affair. This makes it difficult to repair relationships damaged by the perpetrator, and it also leads to depression and trauma for the victims of the affair. This phenomenon appears to occur in the majority of infidelity victims in Sawahan District. One example that illustrates this situation is the case of the household with the initials N and B. (B, Observation, Sawahan, 19 Januari 2024)

b. Loss of Trust

A betrayed partner may lose trust in the cheater, making the relationship difficult to repair. Furthermore, others will likely view the cheater negatively. It's not uncommon for the cheater's family to face social sanctions from the community for being deemed unable to keep their family on the right path. This is what family A in Bareng Village, Sawahan District, experienced, where the family also faced negative stigma from the community. (A, Observation, Sawahan, 12 July 2024)

a. Ridicule and mockery

People who cheat may be the subject of ridicule and mockery from others, especially if their crimes are exposed and known. However, observations indicate that this impact is not directly felt. Research shows that this ridicule and mockery occurs only in certain villages and not directly in front of the perpetrators. (B, Observation, Sawahan, 25 Desember 2024)

b. Loss of Reputation

Infidelity can damage a person's reputation in the eyes of others, leading to distrust and disrespect. Generally, reputation is a social perception created based on others' assessments of a person's integrity, honesty, and morality. In fact, engaging in infidelity is often seen as a violation of social and moral norms, thus diminishing their image and the trust others have in them. The results of this study can be seen in cases of infidelity committed by community leaders, including several village heads and government staff involved in affairs in Sawahan District.

According to social trust theory, trust is built through consistent behavior and moral integrity in social relationships. Infidelity demonstrates an inconsistency between commitment and action, leading others to perceive the perpetrator as unreliable or dishonest. In a social context, people who are known to have cheated are often associated with disloyalty, manipulation, or selfishness. As a result, the social environment becomes hesitant to place trust or moral responsibility on them, both in personal and professional relationships.

c. Loss of Support

People who cheat may lose support from their family, friends, or community. Infidelity also implies a decline in honor or social status within the community. From a moral sociology perspective, individuals gain respect through adherence to shared social values and ethics. When someone commits a violation such as infidelity, they are considered to have violated fidelity norms, thereby losing previously held social recognition. Based on research in Margopatut Village, news of a former village head who was reported to have committed an affair quickly spread and created social stigma (M, Interview, Sawahan, 1 Mei 2024). The perpetrator would be considered a source of moral conflict and lose his honorable position in the eyes of the community. As a result, the perpetrator of the affair no longer received votes to win the village head election.

The next research result is a case experienced by a woman with the initials S, a government staff who frequently engaged in extramarital affairs in her work environment. Mrs. S is a government staff at the Sawahan District Office who has good performance in managing finances and administration. However, because her frequent affairs were discovered, Mrs. S's opportunity to concurrently hold the position of Secretary of the District Election Committee (PPK) in the General Election and Regional Head Elections failed and she was not elected. (Observation, Sawahan, 3 Januari 2024). PPK colleagues, including the researcher who was a PPK member at that time, considered her actions to be actions that violated social norms and disrupted comfort while working.

d. Declining Public Legal Awareness

The recent spate of adultery cases in Sawahan District has shifted the public's perspective on the phenomenon of infidelity. This phenomenon indicates a decline in legal awareness, with people no longer understanding and internalizing the legal norms governing marital fidelity. (Yudhayana & Aziz, 2024)

The phenomenon of infidelity has led many people to believe it's a common occurrence. This is based on data interviewed by the author. The author interviewed 40 people, consisting of 32 infidelity perpetrators and 8 community leaders, from diverse backgrounds. Thirty-seven considered infidelity a common and normal occurrence, while the remaining three considered it an unnatural mistake.

a. Integration of Social Norms and Islamic Law as an Effort to Foster Legal Awareness

Analysis of data and theory suggests that the low level of public legal awareness regarding the phenomenon of infidelity is not solely due to weak formal law enforcement, but rather to a breakdown between social norms and Islamic legal norms. On the one hand, Islamic legal norms demand strict moral obedience, while on the other, social norms in society tend to be permissive toward such violations, especially if the perpetrator holds a high social position.

Therefore, to build ideal legal awareness as desired in socio-legal theory, synergy is needed between three main elements, namely:

1) Legal Substance

The substance of this law is in the form of instilling Islamic legal values regarding the sanctity of marriage and the prohibition of adultery. Based on field data, the people of Sawahan District understand that Islamic law strictly prohibits adultery and upholds the sanctity of marriage. However, this understanding has not been fully internalized in daily behavior. Many individuals are aware of this prohibition but still engage in or tolerate adultery. This indicates that the substance of Islamic law has not yet fully formed a strong legal awareness within the community.

2) Legal Structure

Legal structures can be integrated through the active role of social institutions and religious leaders in providing moral education and social sanctions. The role of social institutions and religious leaders in providing moral guidance remains limited. Although some religious leaders actively provide counseling in mosques or religious activities, social sanctions against perpetrators of adultery are not consistently and comprehensively implemented. This is evident from the fact that the sanctions imposed are only applied in a few hamlets within Sawahan District, and even in the workplace, there are no sanctions that are burdensome and

provide a lesson for perpetrators of adultery. As a result, the social oversight function is weakened, and Islamic law lacks adequate structural support to suppress deviant behavior.

3) Legal Culture

This legal culture takes the form of instilling moral values through family education and community social activities. If these three elements are integrated, Islamic legal norms will not only be written rules but can also serve as living values *that* guide the behavior of the Sawahan community toward a dignified social order in accordance with Islamic teachings. In terms of legal culture, family and social education have not been effective in instilling the values of loyalty and moral responsibility. Modernization and the influence of social media have led some people to view infidelity as normal or a private matter. This indicates that the instilling of moral values has not yet become an ingrained culture.

4. Conclusion

The public tends to view infidelity as a moral issue and a private family matter, rather than a legal violation, resulting in suboptimal law enforcement. The phenomenon of infidelity is on the rise and takes various forms, ranging from digital infidelity, emotional infidelity, physical/sexual infidelity, to micro-cheating. This is influenced by various factors such as lack of communication within the household, emotional dissatisfaction, economic pressure, social environmental influences, and advances in technology and social media. From a social perspective, there are differences in societal responses based on social status and education level. Perpetrators with higher status tend to be "protected" or ignored, while perpetrators with lower status are more often subject to social sanctions. This indicates an imbalance in the application of legal norms and awareness in society. The impacts of infidelity are far-reaching, including damaged family relationships, psychological distress, loss of trust, and a decline in morals and social harmony. In fact, this phenomenon also contributes to a collective decline in societal legal awareness, as it is increasingly seen as normal. Therefore, serious efforts are needed to raise legal awareness through the integration of social norms, positive law, and Islamic legal values, as well as the active role of community leaders and social institutions. This way, it is hoped that infidelity will no longer be considered normal, but rather a violation that must be prevented to maintain the moral and social order of society.

5. References

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