Blantika : Multidisciplinary Jornal
Volume 3 Number 11, November, 2025
p- ISSN 2987-758X e-ISSN 2985-4199

Analysis of Strain Criminology Theory on Perpetrators of Falsification of Population Administration Documents in Accordance with Law Number 23 of 2006

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ABSTRACT

The falsification of population administration documents is a form of crime that has serious implications for state administrative order and legal protection of society. This phenomenon can be analyzed through the strain criminology theory, which emphasizes social, economic, and structural pressures that drive individuals to commit deviant acts. This study aims to analyze the motives and driving factors of perpetrators of falsification of population administration documents using the perspective of strain theory, and to examine its relevance within the framework of Indonesian positive law, particularly Law Number 23 of 2006 on Population Administration. The research method used is normative juridical, by examining statutory regulations, criminological literature, and legal doctrines. The analysis shows that falsification of population documents is generally driven by economic pressure, limited access to administrative services, and certain social needs that cannot be fulfilled legally. From the strain perspective, these conditions generate tension that drives perpetrators to seek shortcuts through falsification. Meanwhile, Law Number 23 of 2006 explicitly regulates prohibitions and criminal sanctions against the falsification of population documents, although its enforcement still faces obstacles in prevention and law enforcement. Therefore, synergy between criminological and juridical approaches is needed to address this crime, namely by strengthening population administrative services, increasing legal awareness among society, and implementing both penal and non-penal policies in a balanced manner.

Keywords: *Strain Criminology Theory, Document Forgery, Population Administration.*

INTRODUCTION

The falsification of population administration documents is a criminal phenomenon that not only harms the state in terms of legality and finances but also creates social inequality within society (Saputro, Febriandika, Hertanto, & Rahmawati, 2025; Wakefield & Turney, 2025).

Essential legal instruments such as Identity Cards (KTP), Family Cards (KK), and Birth Certificates function as gateways to access public services (Firdausiva & Choiriyah, 2025; Zulkarnaen, 2025). However, many people are tempted to falsify these documents due to social and economic pressures. Hidayat and Prasetyo (2021) emphasize that the primary cause of widespread document falsification lies in the urgent need for access to public services that require legal documents, while not all individuals have the financial means or administrative access to obtain them lawfully. This condition makes falsification an alternative for some communities to overcome structural barriers, thereby threatening the integrity of national demographic data that the government seeks to secure through electronic administration systems (Msuya, 2025; Mustafa, Rafiq, Jhamat, Arshad, & Rana, 2025).

From a criminological perspective, this issue can be explained through strain theory. Merton (1938/1968) argues that when individuals face a gap between socially accepted goals and the legitimate means to achieve them, they often resort to illegal alternatives. Empirical studies reinforce this view. Fadillah and Yuliyanto (2020) found that perpetrators often come from low-income groups seeking employment, education, or healthcare, but lacking the legal documents required. In such cases, falsification is less a reflection of malicious intent and more a response to structural and economic pressures that cannot be addressed through legal means.

Legally, Law No. 23 of 2006 on Population Administration and its amendment in Law No. 24 of 2013 mandate that every citizen must possess and maintain valid population documents. The law explicitly criminalizes falsification and imposes sanctions on those who intentionally provide false information (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 23 Tahun 2006; Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 24 Tahun 2013). However, implementation remains weak. Ramadhani and Sutrisno (2022) highlight that weak supervision at the local level, combined with loopholes in digital population systems, creates opportunities for falsification and even the illicit trade of fake documents.

The current legal system in Indonesia still relies heavily on punitive measures, often failing to address root causes such as inequality in access, bureaucratic complexity, and economic hardship (Handayani & Kusuma, 2021). In this regard, the sociological dimension has yet to become mainstream in policy and law enforcement. Kurniawan and Oktavia (2023) suggest that strain criminology provides a more comprehensive alternative for understanding administrative crimes, viewing perpetrators not merely as criminals but as individuals driven by structural pressures. Thus, crime prevention policies should prioritize preventive measures, including simplifying administrative processes, increasing legal literacy, and empowering marginalized groups (Susanti & Rahmawati, 2023).

Therefore, this study applies the strain criminology framework to analyze the falsification of population administration documents in the context of Law No. 23 of 2006, under the title: "*Analysis of Strain Criminology Theory on Perpetrators of Falsification of Population Administration Documents in Accordance with Law Number 23 of 2006.*" The theory of criminal responsibility provides the foundation for determining whether an individual can be held legally accountable for a crime. It emphasizes that liability arises only if the perpetrator fulfills the legal elements of an offense and possesses culpability, either through intent (dolus) or negligence (culpa) (Hiariej, 2016; Simons, 1997). In the context of population document falsification, Law No. 23 of 2006, particularly Article 93, explicitly criminalizes those who deliberately provide false information in civil registration (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 23 Tahun 2006).

From the perspective of strain criminology, however, perpetrators may not act solely out of malicious intent but as a response to structural and social pressures (Burke, 2025; Guardado

Hernandez, 2025). Merton (1968) explains that when individuals face a gap between socially approved goals and limited legal means, they often resort to deviant adaptations such as falsification. While this theory helps explain the sociological background of the crime, it does not eliminate the offender's criminal liability (Narvey, Orrick, Piquero, & Piquero, 2025; Skolnik, 2024). Instead, social factors may serve as mitigating considerations in sentencing rather than grounds for exoneration (Fadillah & Yuliyanto, 2020). Thus, criminal responsibility in document falsification combines two dimensions: a juridical framework that establishes culpability based on intent, and a criminological perspective that contextualizes the offender's actions within broader structural constraints (Agnew, 2006; Kurniawan & Oktavia, 2023).

The theory of punishment serves as a philosophical and practical foundation in determining the form, purpose, and function of criminal sanctions (Alghali, 2025; Bagaric, 2025). In Indonesian law, punishment for falsification of population administration documents is regulated in Law No. 23 of 2006, Article 93, which stipulates imprisonment and/or fines for those who intentionally provide false information (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 23 Tahun 2006). Classical theories of punishment consist of three approaches. The absolute theory views punishment as retribution for wrongdoing (Kant, as cited in Hiariej, 2016). The relative theory emphasizes deterrence, both general (preventing society at large from committing crimes) and special (preventing the offender from reoffending) (Vold, Bernard, & Snipes, 2002). Meanwhile, the mixed theory, which is dominant in Indonesia, combines both approaches by ensuring proportional retribution while promoting prevention and rehabilitation (Agusta, Madjid, & Aprilianda, 2025; Riziq, 2025).

From the perspective of strain criminology, punishment must also be seen in relation to the social and structural pressures that drive individuals to commit falsification. Merton (1968) argues that inequality between societal goals (e.g., education, employment, legal recognition) and the limited legal means to achieve them produces strain, which may lead to innovation through illegal acts such as document forgery. Therefore, punishment should not be purely repressive but must incorporate corrective justice and rehabilitation, enabling offenders to reintegrate into society (Agnew, 2006; Fadillah & Yuliyanto, 2020).

In this sense, punishment for document falsification should strike a balance between protecting state administrative order and addressing the underlying social conditions that foster such crimes (Kurniawan & Oktavia, 2023).

The theory of criminal law policy (kebijakan hukum pidana) is part of broader criminal policy, aimed at controlling crime through legal instruments. According to Arief (2008), criminal law policy is also part of social policy, functioning as a tool of social control to protect order, justice, and public welfare. In the context of population administration, Law No. 23 of 2006 and its amendment, Law No. 24 of 2013, explicitly prohibit falsification of documents and impose criminal sanctions, including imprisonment and fines, for offenders (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 23 Tahun 2006; Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 24 Tahun 2013).

Normatively, these provisions demonstrate the state's penal policy to maintain the integrity of demographic data. However, when analyzed using strain criminology, criminal law policy must not only be repressive but also address structural and social causes of crime. Merton (1968) and Agnew (2006) explain that crimes such as document falsification often arise from social inequality, bureaucratic inefficiency, and limited legal access to civil registration services. Empirical studies confirm that weak supervision, corruption, and digital system loopholes continue to create opportunities for falsification (Ramadhani & Sutrisno, 2022; Putri & Hendra, 2021). Therefore, criminal law policy must integrate both penal and non-penal measures. This includes not only punishment but also preventive reforms, such as simplifying administrative procedures (Susanti & Rahmawati, 2023), improving legal awareness (Handayani & Kusuma, 2021), and ensuring equal access to population services (Kurniawan & Oktavia, 2023). Such integrative policies will make the law not only repressive but also progressive and responsive to social realities (Laksana, Lubis, Suwondo, Ngazis, & Sari, 2025; Setyawan, 2025).

This study aims to contextualize document falsification within the framework of strain criminology, examining how structural pressures inform legal responsibility and the adequacy of current penal policies. The theoretical contribution lies in integrating criminological perspectives with legal analysis to develop a more holistic understanding of administrative crimes. From a policy standpoint, this research underscores the need for balanced approaches that combine legal enforcement with structural reforms. Comparatively, countries facing similar challenges—such as India with its Aadhaar system or South Africa with post-apartheid identity documentation—have recognized that purely punitive measures are insufficient without addressing underlying social inequalities and improving access to legal documentation systems.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed a normative juridical approach with a focus on analytical descriptive analysis. The primary data sources included statutory regulations, particularly Law Number 23 of 2006 concerning Population Administration as amended by Law Number 24 of 2013, supported by relevant legal doctrines and criminological literature. The research methodology integrated legal interpretation techniques with theoretical analysis to examine the relationship between strain criminology theory and the legal framework governing population document falsification.

Data collection was conducted through document studies and literature review, focusing on three main aspects: statutory regulations, criminological theories (particularly strain theory), and empirical findings from previous research. The analytical process involved several stages: first, legal interpretation of the provisions in Law Number 23 of 2006 concerning document falsification; second, application of strain criminology theory to understand the socio-economic factors driving such violations; and third, synthesis of legal and criminological perspectives to evaluate the effectiveness of current legal measures.

The research utilized qualitative data analysis with deductive reasoning methods. Legal materials were analyzed through statutory, conceptual, and theoretical approaches, while criminological aspects were examined through the lens of strain theory developed by Merton (1968) and Agnew (2006). This integrated approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of document falsification not only as a legal violation but also as a social phenomenon influenced by structural pressures.

To ensure research validity, source triangulation was applied by cross-referencing information from legal documents, academic literature, and empirical studies. The analysis emphasized the connection between legal norms and social reality, particularly how strain theory could inform more effective legal policies in preventing population document falsification.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Population administration documents, including Identity Cards (KTP), Family Cards (KK), and Birth Certificates, are not only formal identity markers but also legal instruments that guarantee civil rights, provide access to public services, and serve as the foundation for national development planning. Therefore, their authenticity and validity are considered fundamental to the implementation of public administration in Indonesia (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 23 Tahun 2006). Law No. 23 of 2006 on Population Administration, as amended by Law No. 24 of 2013, strictly regulates the legal status of these documents. Articles 93–97 explicitly stipulate criminal sanctions for any individual who intentionally falsifies or uses falsified population documents. The sanctions include imprisonment and/or fines, reflecting the seriousness of such offenses. These provisions emphasize the dual role of the law: (1) a preventive function, by establishing strict mechanisms for the issuance and verification of population documents; and (2) a repressive function, by imposing criminal sanctions to deter offenders and maintain the integrity of administrative systems (Ramadhani & Sutrisno, 2022).

However, the effectiveness of these legal provisions is highly dependent on the integrity of administrative officials, bureaucratic transparency, and public legal awareness. Weak supervision at the local level, combined with limited law enforcement and loopholes in digital administration systems, still provide opportunities for falsification and even illegal trade in population documents (Putri & Hendra, 2021). Moreover, corruption, abuse of authority, and illegal fees in population services often exacerbate the problem, reducing the credibility of the legal framework itself (Wijayanti & Darmawan, 2019).

This gap between normative regulation and practical implementation highlights the importance of reinforcing institutional integrity. Training in ethics, stronger internal monitoring, and strict sanctions for officials involved in falsification are crucial to restore trust in population administration (Handayani & Kusuma, 2021). At the same time, strengthening legal literacy among the public is essential to raise awareness about the importance of valid documents and the risks associated with falsification. In sum, while the legal framework under Law No. 23 of 2006 establishes a strong normative basis for preventing and punishing document falsification, its practical success depends on the synergy between legal enforcement, bureaucratic reform, and public participation (Kurniawan & Oktavia, 2023).

The falsification of population administration documents in Indonesia can be better understood through the lens of strain criminology. Strain theory, first introduced by Merton (1938/1968), posits that deviant behavior arises when there is a discrepancy between culturally approved goals and the availability of legitimate means to achieve them. In societies where access to education, employment, healthcare, and social benefits depend heavily on legal documentation, individuals who lack the ability to obtain such documents lawfully may resort to illegal alternatives such as document falsification.

This theoretical framework provides a deeper explanation of why falsification persists despite strict legal sanctions. It shifts the analysis from purely juridical aspects to the socio-economic pressures that shape criminal behavior. According to Agnew (2006), strain is not limited to economic deprivation but also includes broader social pressures, such as bureaucratic inefficiency, discrimination, and institutional barriers. In the context of Indonesia, bureaucratic complexity, high costs of obtaining legal documents, and limited accessibility in rural areas exacerbate these pressures, making falsification appear to some individuals as the only viable option (Hidayat & Prasetyo, 2021).

Empirical evidence supports this perspective. Fadillah and Yuliyanto (2020) found that perpetrators of document falsification often come from lower-income groups who require documents to secure jobs, enroll children in school, or access healthcare. Instead of being driven solely by malicious intent, their actions represent a form of adaptation—what Merton classified as innovation—where individuals accept socially approved goals but use unlawful means to achieve them. Kurniawan and Oktavia (2023) similarly argue that structural inequality and bureaucratic inefficiency fuel frustration, which in turn increases the likelihood of administrative crimes.

Furthermore, strain theory helps to contextualize falsification not only as individual deviance but also as a systemic issue. The involvement of brokers and, at times, corrupt officials indicates that falsification can evolve into an organized practice sustained by institutional weaknesses (Ramadhani & Sutrisno, 2022). In this sense, the falsification of population documents is both a personal adaptation to strain and a reflection of broader structural failures within public administration.

The application of strain criminology theory therefore enriches the understanding of this crime by demonstrating that criminal behavior cannot be detached from social context. It also suggests that punitive measures alone are insufficient. Instead, policies should address the underlying causes of strain by simplifying administrative procedures, ensuring affordable access to services, and strengthening institutional accountability (Susanti & Rahmawati, 2023; Handayani & Kusuma, 2021). In conclusion, strain theory highlights that falsification of population administration documents is less about individual immorality and more about systemic pressures. By recognizing this, policymakers can design more effective preventive strategies that combine legal enforcement with social and bureaucratic reforms.

The falsification of population administration documents is a crime with serious implications for state administrative order, the validity of demographic data, and the legitimacy of public services. Viewed through the perspective of strain criminology, such crime does not emerge in a vacuum but rather as a response to social, economic, and bureaucratic pressures experienced by individuals or groups (Merton, 1968; Agnew, 2006). Population documents are essential prerequisites for accessing fundamental rights and services, including education, healthcare, social assistance, and political participation. When individuals face barriers to obtaining such documents legally—such as complex bureaucracy, unequal access to services, or financial constraints—these conditions generate strain that may push them toward alternative solutions, including falsification (Hidayat & Prasetyo, 2021).

The relevance of strain theory to prevention lies in the state's responsibility to reduce these social tensions that form the root causes of crime. Strategies such as simplifying administrative procedures, eliminating illegal levies, and optimizing digital services can significantly reduce opportunities for falsification (Susanti & Rahmawati, 2023). Thus, prevention should not rely solely on criminal sanctions but also on structural reforms that address barriers to accessing legal documentation. Strain theory further emphasizes that law enforcement alone is insufficient without accompanying social policies to mitigate public frustration. While repressive measures remain necessary for their deterrent effect, they must be complemented by preventive strategies, such as legal education campaigns to raise awareness about the risks and consequences of document falsification and the importance of maintaining authentic demographic data (Handayani & Kusuma, 2021).

Moreover, strain theory helps explain why some cases of falsification involve collective actors or organized syndicates. Such practices reflect a form of innovation, where legitimate societal goals (such as securing benefits or social status) are pursued through unlawful means (Fadillah & Yuliyanto, 2020). This underscores the importance of structural solutions, including strengthening official integrity, improving internal supervision, and expanding the use of advanced verification technologies that are more resistant to falsification (Ramadhani & Sutrisno, 2022). In conclusion, the application of strain criminology provides an important framework for building a more comprehensive approach. The crime of population document falsification cannot be addressed solely through punitive sanctions but requires improvements in social systems, bureaucratic structures, and public service delivery to reduce the strain factors that drive individuals toward such acts (Kurniawan & Oktavia, 2023).

CONCLUSION

The Population Administration Law No. 23 of 2006 treats the authenticity of population documents as essential for civil rights, public services, and national planning, using preventive issuance and verification procedures alongside criminal penalties to deter falsification. Its effectiveness hinges on bureaucratic integrity, transparency, and public legal awareness. Falsification stems not only from individual malice but also from social, economic, and bureaucratic pressures; strain theory explains that when legitimate means to achieve goals like employment, education, or social aid are blocked, individuals may adopt illegal alternatives as a form of adaptation or innovation to overcome barriers. To reduce motivation for document falsification, policies must address structural pressures, simplify procedures, and improve access and awareness, while future research should test interventions that enhance administrative trust and reduce systemic obstacles.

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