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SOCIAL LEARNING PROCESS IN HOUSEHOLD ELECTRICITY THEFT: CASE STUDY IN TANJUNG BURUNG VILLAGE, TELUKNAGA DISTRICT, TANGERANG REGENCY

Sayyidah Nailu Afiyah
Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia
Email: sayyidahnailu@gmail.com

KEYWORDS
electricity theft; imitation; weak law; social learning; legal electricity; illegal electricity; Tanjung Burung Village

ABSTRACT

This article aims to analyze the process and factors behind the collective theft of electricity in Tanjung Burung Village. This research used qualitative methode with data collection by observation, interviews and documentation. In analyzing the collective theft of electricity in Tanjung Burung Village, we use the concept of social learning theory from Ronald Akers which focuses on four main concepts, differential association, definition, differential reinforcement, and imitation. The results of this study show that electricity theft in Tanjung Burung Village occurs because of the existence of criminal values transmitted through contact access that supports criminal behavior and a weak legal system against electricity theft behavior. In the concept of differential association, a person is faced with behavior that is profitable to commit electricity theft so that it is considered a definition that is justified and not too bad to do. In differential reinforcement there are rewards and punishments obtained by the perpetrator but this does not make a deterrent because there are various ways to take the peaceful way. Electricity theft that continues to occur collectively is generally motivated by imitate some behavior from previous perpetrators and supported by weak laws.

INTRODUCTION

The use of electrical resources has become part of people's lives which has many meanings in everyday life, both in terms of matters related to the elements of quality of life and in terms of supporting productivity (Akhadi, 2009). The use of electrical resources increasingly has a place in society. This can be seen in the production of electricity resources which are increasing every year. During 2021, the production ofelectricity resources (including purchases from outside PLN) amounted to 289,470.57 GWh. Of this production, electrical energy purchased from outside PLN amounted to 106,496.69 GWh (36.79%). The purchase of electrical energy increased by 9,337.95 GWh or 9.61% compared to the previous year (PLN Statistics, 2021a).

The increase in electricity production is motivated by the increasing public need for electricity so that the consumption of electricity used by the Indonesian people also increases. This can be seen in the increase in electricity sales. Where the amount of electrical energy in 2021 sold was 257,634.25 GWh. Customer groups Industry consumes 80,904.45 GWh (31.40%), Households 115,370.05 GWh (44.78%), Businesses 44,440.85 GWh (17.25%), and Others (social, government buildings and public street lighting) 16,918.91 GWh (6.57%). The largest electricity sales are found in household customer groups. In addition, the number of customers at the end of 2021 was 82,543,980 and there was an increase in subscribers by 4.49% from the end of 2020 (PLN Statistics, 2021b). However, the increase in the number of electricity consumers and sales is inseparable from the various problems faced by the State-

owned Electricity Company (PLN). These problems can occur in network shrinkage or the level of loss (*losses*) of electrical energy from transmission and distribution networks.

The cause of electrical energy losses can be technical and commercial errors. Technical errors can occur due to improper distribution system design. Meanwhile, commercial errors can be meter defects, errors in meter readings and electricity theft (Sharma et al, 2016).

Various efforts have been made to reduce the number of *losses* or shrinkage that can gradually improve. During2021, energy shrinkage was 8.59%, consisting of transmission shrinkage of 1.97% and distribution shrinkage of 6.77%. Energy shrinkage in 2021 is better than in 2020, which is 9.15% (PLN Statistics, 2021c).

With the decrease in energy shrinkage, it is not instant that electrical problems have been resolved. There are various electrical problems that have not been completely addressed, one of which is electricity theft which is carried out in various modes and occurs in various regions. One of the places where electricity theft occurs is in the PLN Area of the Customer Service Implementation Unit (UP3) Teluknaga. This is as in the monthly shrinkage data calculated from 2020-2021 in the PLN UP3 Teluknaga area:

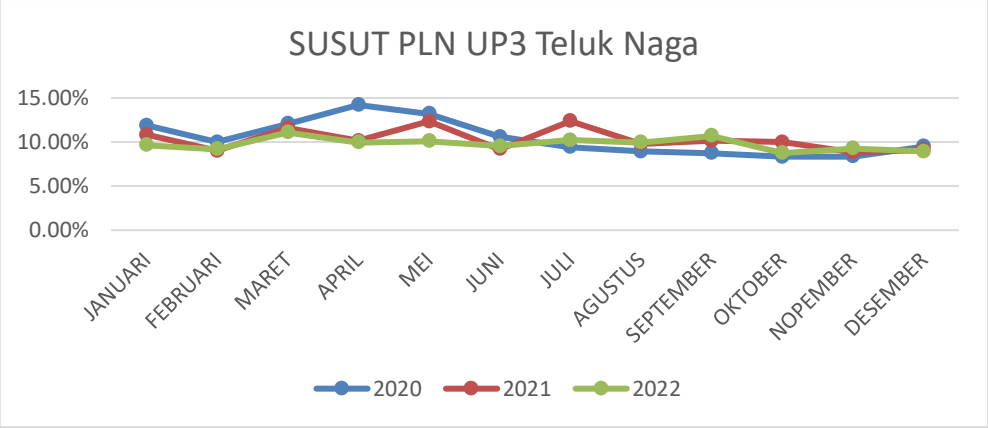

Figure 1. Shrinkage PLN UP3 Teluk Naga

From the data above, it can be seen that there is still a high level of energy shrinkage in the PLN UP3 Teluknaga work area. The shrinkage rate has gone up and down every month in different years, starting from 2020 to 2022. The lowest shrinkage rate in PLN Teluknaga area was 8.34% in October 2020 while the highest rate was 14.20% in April 2020. The rise and fall of energy shrinkage levels in PLN Teluknaga area is caused by various factors, one of which is electricity theft which is still rife in the PLN UP3 Teluknaga work area. Electricity theft that is rife in PLN Teluknaga area is one of the contributors to shrinkage in the area.

The working area of PLN UP3 Teluknaga is 389 **km²** which covers 15 sub-districts with 136 villages or kelurahan (Youtube PLN UP3 Teluk Naga, 2019). Where Tanjung Burung Village, Teluknaga District is one of the villages that is the scope of work of PLN UP3 Teluknaga. Tanjung Burung Village is one of the villages contributing to the high level of *losses* in the UP3 Teluknaga working area with the illegal use of electricity by the community so that Tanjung Burung Village is considered a red zone in contributing to *losses*. Electricity theft that occurs is carried out by PLN customers and non-customers in various modes and

ways whose installation regulations do not meet PLN standards and procedures. There are various modes used to obtain illegal electricity, such as direct connection from the Electric Power Network (JTL) to Customer-Owned Installations (IMP) or known as *by pass*, tapping electricity with ownership of kWh meters or without ownership of kWh meters or known as *levering* and various other modes. Theft of electricity in Tanjung Burung Village has become a common action to do so that it can harm the State-Owned Electricity Company (PLN) because it has eliminated the main commodity in the form of electrical energy.

There have been previous studies that have conducted studies on electricity theft, such as research conducted by (Sharma *et al*, 2016) where electricity losses occur due to technical and commercial problems in the form of meter defects, electricity theft, improper distribution system design and so on. Previous research saw electricity theft as a crime that can be stopped through technological restrictions by making electrical theft detection tools. This is in line with research conducted by (Sony et al., 2016). where the detection of electricity theft is carried out by utilizing a device paired to a kWh meter to monitor the amount of electricity consumption. However, the existence of technology to detect electricity theft has not been able to change the habit of stealing electricity carried out by the people of Tanjung Burung Village even though it has been regulated in the Electricity Law No. 30 of 2009 article 51 (paragraph 3) which reads;

> *"Any person who uses electricity that is not his right unlawfully shall be punished with a maximum imprisonment of 7 (seven) years and a maximum fine of Rp2,500,000,000.00 (two billion five hundred million rupiah)."*

The law governing electricity theft is only considered a written regulation so that the people of Tanjung Burung Village continue to carry out deviant behavior in the form of electricity theft. This deviant behavior is carried out collectively so that this paper is here to study and find out more about the background of the people of Tanjung Burung Village committing unlawful acts by stealing electricity.

The purpose of this research is; (1) to find out the process of unlawful acts by stealing household electricity carried out collectively by the Tanjung Burung Village community, (2) to find out the efforts made by PLN in handling cases of electricity theft collectively.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study aims to explain the theft of household electricity using a qualitative research approach because it can develop sensitivity to concepts and depictions of reality that are not singular (Idrus, 2009). This research is a case study by conducting a research process on certain units or cases, namely cases of theft of household electricity that occurred in Tanjung Burung Village. Thus, the research subject chosen by the researcher is based on certain criteria so that the information obtained is more accurate. The criteria for selecting research subjects are the people of Tanjung Burung Village who are customers or non-customers of PLN who have illegal electricity connections or steal electricity for their household needs. The selection of informants uses snowball analysis units to make it easier to obtain informants who match the

criteria mentioned. The research process was carried out in order to obtain key informants who are relevant to this research theme (Idrus, 2009).

The research was conducted in Tanjung Burung Village, Teluknaga District, Tangerang Regency, Banten. Researchers chose the area because Tanjung Burung Village is one of the contributors to energy losses in the PLN UP3 Teluknaga royal area.

In the research process, data collection uses two types of data, namely primary and secondary data. The primary data is sourced from observations and interviews. In this process, data is obtained from various things seen, heard, and observed. While secondary data comes from various literature, such as books, magazines, journals, and various literature related to this research topic.

After the data is collected, a data analysis is carried out so that the information that has been obtained during the research can be collected more clearly. The data that has been collected will be analyzed with a qualitative approach interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman, which consists of three main things, namely data reduction, data presentation and conclusion drawing (Idrus, 2009).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Electricity theft is an illegal act with a form of energy loss that is non-technical, including illegal connections, tapping, affecting measuring instruments or meters, and various other modes with the aim of getting cheaper or free electricity (Dick, 1995, in Depuru et al, 2011). There are several communities in Tanjung Burung Village that have not been connected to legal electricity so various ways are done to get daily electricity needs. One of them is by stealing electricity in various ways such as making a direct connection from the Electric Power Network (JTL) or electricity poles to Installations Owned by Electric Power Users (IMP) without kWh meters or without legal rights regarding the use of electricity. This makes the perpetrator have no electricity bill at all. There is also electricity theft with the possession of kWh meters so that perpetrators commit electricity theft only for part of their electrical power which is intended for certain objects with large electrical power, such as refrigerators, televisions, *rice cookers, Air Conditioners* (AC), and other electronic objects. Another way is to ride to the nearest house or known as *levering*, which is the distribution of electricity from PLN customers to non-customers. Generally, levering will be charged a monthly fee paid to the owner of the kWh meter with an agreement between the two parties, between the owner of the kWh and someone who does the *levering*, but usually the owner of the kWh meter also steals electricity so that the electrical power used is enough to flow other parcels, the strength of the power owned and the electricity bill paid to PLN is not too large

There is a process of electricity theft that has become a habit and is carried out collectively and for generations by the people of Tanjung Burung Village. The process of electricity theft will refer to the theory developed by Akers regarding social learning with a focus on four main concepts, namely differential association, definition, differential reinforcement, and imitation.

Differential Association

Differential association refers to the process by which a person is faced with a favorable or unfavorable definition for unlawful or law-abiding behavior. In differential associations there is an interactional dimension, namely the existence of direct relationships and interactions with people involved in deviant behavior (Akers, 2013).

The electricity theft that occurred in Tanjung Burung Village was faced with a mature thought process regarding the gains and losses of the actions he committed. The profits obtained from the theft of electricity in Tanjung Burung Village make this action will continue to be carried out. In addition, there is an interactional dimension with relatives who engage in deviant behavior with the benefit obtained in the form of *levering* so that it is able to flow other parcels without a shortage of electrical power with bills that are cheaper than the amount of power used.

Usually *levering* is always accompanied by a direct connection or by *pass* so that the power used is able to supply electricity to other parcels and so that electricity bills are not too large and even free. *By pass* or direct connection can be done for the entire flow of electricity or only for part of the flow of electricity. *By* pass is done for some electricity flow usually with a kWh meter while *by pass* is done for all electricity flow usually without ownership of a kWh meter so that the electricity obtained comes from a direct connection to the Electric Power Network (JTL) without going through a kWh meter. This illustrates that the perpetrator is a non-customer who uses electricity without a legal base so that he has no electricity bill at all even though he uses large electrical power.

Electricity theft that occurs in Tanjung Burung Village is a beneficial action for perpetrators because some of the perpetrators do not need to pay electricity bills or pay electricity bills at low prices with greater electricity consumption. Thus, PLN, the state and PLN customers are victims who are harmed from cases of electricity theft.

In addition, in differential association there is a model imitating with differential reinforcement in the form of sources, schedules, values, and quantities. The model of mimicking in differential associations is found in groups that come from family and friends, with associations that occur in the form of priority, duration, frequency, and intensity that occur tend to last longer and more often by involving others who have closer relationships so that will tend to have a greater effect on imitative behavior (Akers, 2013).

Imitating models that come from family or friends can result in acts of electricity theft in Tanjung Burung Village occurring collectively. This is based on various social learning mechanisms and differential strengthening in the act of electricity theft. Differential reinforcement in the act of electricity theft comes from various groups, such as from PLN or from someone who understands electricity, known as village PLN. Village PLN services are widely used by the surrounding community to *levering*, *by pass* and repair other electrical equipment. Generally, village PLN has a dual profession because illegal electricity installation work is not always there every day.

Theft of electricity sourced from PLN and PLN kampung seems to have become a common practice which is then carried out collectively by the people of Tanjung Burung Village so that it is difficult to eliminate and can occur continuously with a long duration. The

benefits obtained make the perpetrators have no desire and motivation to connect to legal electricity.

Definition

A definition is a person's attitude or meaning attached to a given behavior as an orientation, rationalization, situation definition, and evaluative attitude that defines an action regarding right or wrong, good or bad, desirable or undesirable, justified or unjustified. Everyone has their own definition of electricity-stealing behavior based on various reasons to stay connected to illegal electricity (Akers, 2013).

The theft of electricity in Tanjung Burung Village is motivated by a rationality that the perpetrators are economically disadvantaged people. Inability is the reason for being able to continue to connect to illegal electricity. This is in line with (Smith, 2004) research, where the practice of electricity theft is quite common to be carried out, especially in poor residential areas. Many poor people want electricity but cannot afford to pay for it, so stealing electricity is a solution. In addition, there is a situation that encourages and supports electricity theft which makes this behavior considered as a definition that is justified by perpetrators and the surrounding community who also commit electricity theft. Electricity theft that occurs is not only carried out by perpetrators who do not have a kWh meter, but perpetrators who already have a kWh meter also commit electricity theft in order to use large power with small electricity bills and even free. However, while perpetrators can still connect to illegal electricity, legal electricity is not a top priority so incompetence is only a protective reason to continue to be able to connect to illegal electricity.

Economic incompetence is not a reason to commit electricity theft because there are various solutions offered to be able to connect to legal electricity, one of which is the PLN program in the form of installing free kWh meters for poor people (PT PLN Annual Report, 2018), installing kWh meters with gradual payments from the Village Electricity program (LISDES) held by PLN (RUPTL PLN 2018), and programs offered by private banks, namely from PT. Mitra Bisnis Keluarga Ventura or known as MBK bank which offers installments for the installation of kWh meters with payments that can be paid in installments every week (mbk-ventura.com).

According to Suryawati (2004), there are four forms of poverty, but the form of absolute poverty is a definition that is often used. Absolute poverty is a condition in which the income of a person or group of people is below the poverty line so that it is insufficient to meet the standard needs for clothing, food, shelter, health, housing, and education (Marthalina, 2018). From the definition of absolute poverty, people who are classified as poor people will only need electricity for lighting their homes because they cannot afford to have many goods that require electrical power. However, electricity theft in Tanjung Burung Village is generally intended for various kinds of goods that require large electricity so that it shows that the perpetrators are not people who are classified as economically poor because they are able to have various kinds of goods that require large electricity . A person's ability to buy items that require electricity should be followed by the ability to connect with sufficient electrical power. However, in fact this is not the case so that poverty becomes a protective tool so that

perpetrators can still be connected to illegal electricity. Thus, impoverishment is only a protective excuse used by perpetrators so that electricity theft becomes a form of behavior that is allowed and justified by the surrounding community and related parties.

In social learning theory, there are definitions that are general and specific. The general definition includes religious, moral, conventional and non-accepting values and norms as well as supporting to commit deviant or criminal acts. A specific definition directs and supports a person to perform a specific set of actions (Akers, 2013).

Theft of electricity for various reasons is considered a justified action by perpetrators and people around who also commit electricity theft. This is supported by the existence of a specific definition that directs and supports a person to perform a series of deviant actions. The specific definition is in line with the actions taken by PLN kampung, namely the act of directing and supporting electricity theft by assisting the installation of illegal electricity. However, electricity theft is a behavior that is not justified and not supported by PLN, this is in line with the general definition that does not support irregularities. On the other hand, theft has been regulated in the Criminal Code (KUHP), Chapter XXII, Article 362 concerning theft, namely;

> *... Taking something, wholly or partly belonging to another person, with intent to possess unlawfully, is punishable for theft*

The law insists that stealing and breaking the law is not justified. However, on the other hand, there are actions that approve and support the theft of electricity so that the law is only considered a written regulation and can even be violated by related individuals.

The greater a person disagrees with a particular action, the fewer people engage in it, but conversely, the more one approves of a particular action, the more likely one will do it (Akers, 2013). Support for committing electricity theft means agreeing to commit a criminal act as something that can benefit the commission of a crime or deviant behavior that is fundamentally positive or neutralizing. A positive definition is an attitude that makes deviant behavior desirable and entirely permissible. Meanwhile, a neutralizing definition is an act that supports a crime by justifying or forgiving it. Deviant actions are considered as something that may not be desirable but given that the situation remains fine, then it is justified, forgiven and not too bad to do (Akers, 2013).

The assumption that electricity theft is only considered as misuse of electricity and is not considered as electricity theft makes some PLN and village officials provide a neutralizing definition so that the act of stealing electricity is an understandable act. One of the village officials excused this action because of the reason that the community lacked information about electricity. However, it cannot be justified and forgiven to continue to commit electricity theft because PLN also continues to socialize about electricity by distributing sparkles, brochures, putting up banners about the dangers of stealing electricity and doing socialization by inviting RT, RW, and several community representatives, but socialization carried out by PLN is considered ineffective in preventing and reducing electricity theft. Thus, a definition once internalized will then govern a person's decision to commit a crime or not (Lilly et al., 2015). Electricity theft that occurs in Tanjung Burung Village is an act that is beneficial for perpetrators so that from various definitions, once internalized, electricity theft will still be carried out.

Differential Gain

Differential reinforcement refers to the balance of rewards and punishments obtained as a consequence of the behavior committed. Rewards and punishments will determine whether a criminal behavior will continue to be repeated again or not (Lilly et al., 2015). The rewards and penalties obtained from the act of electricity theft are generally in the form of fines or permanent or temporary power cuts. The consequences obtained determine that the behavior of stealing electricity will continue to be repeated or not. Continued involvement in crime will reward the activity. The stronger and more frequent the positive consequences obtained, the more likely it is that criminal behavior will continue. But on the contrary, if negative consequences are obtained, it is likely that criminal behavior will not be repeated again (Lilly et al., 2015).

There are penalties for any deviant behavior so that the act of electricity theft carried out does not always run smoothly. The reward for stealing electricity can be in the form of fines which are a form of negative consequences, so it should have a deterrent effect and not repeat the fight again. However, this does not make all perpetrators of electricity theft feel deterred for their actions because there is an assumption that when the fine money has been paid, it is allowed to be connected to illegal electricity. In addition, there are bribes of some money to electricity control officials as a way to avoid sanctions. This is in line (Smith, 2004), that electricity theft continues to occur because it involves electricity company employees who are bribed by unscrupulous individuals. Giving a sum of money or bribes is a solution in order to stay connected to illegal electricity without following the fine process set by PLN and so that there is no disconnection to illegal electricity.

According to Katiyar (2005), the driving factors of electricity theft behavior are an increase in electricity demand, an increase in electricity tariffs, collusion by electricity sector managers and the encouragement of the socio-political environment to commit theft. The management of the electricity sector colludes openly so that the perpetrators of electricity theft and electricity control officers can both profits so that when the consequences of stealing electricity will be given, it can be taken in various peaceful ways that can benefit the perpetrators of electricity theft and the electricity control party. The weak laws and consequences of stealing electricity make electricity theft considered a common thing to do because of the increasingly frequent positive consequences given by the electricity control party.

The process of deviant behavior operates in the social environment in a fairly complex way and corresponds to a "matching function" in which there is a balance of rewards and punishments attached to each behavior (Akers, 2013). This is in line with the act of stealing electricity which in the process looks complicated. Where there is avoidance of the consequences of stealing electricity by temporarily removing illegal electricity with the help of village PLN in order to manipulate the use of illegal electricity. Generally, the removal of illegal electricity is carried out from the existence of issues circulating in the community that there will be a regulation of electricity. However, after being felt safe from inspection by PLN, the illegal electricity will be reconnected in order to meet household electricity needs at a low

cost and even free. Thus, a temporary disconnection of illegal electricity connections can manipulate that the perpetrator did not commit electricity theft.

Imitation

Imitation refers to involvement in behavior after observing similar behavior in others. The imitated behavior will be influenced by the observed consequences (Bandura, 1977). Electricity theft in Tanjung Burung Village occurs because of imitation found from various parties, both PLN, people who understand electricity or village PLN, family, friends and the surrounding community who first commit electricity theft. There are various imitations on how to commit electricity theft provided by PLN, one of which is information on how to make illegal electricity connections. This information makes people flock to make illegal electricity connections together. The imitation of electricity theft provided by PLN aims to enable its customers to be supplied with sufficient electricity. Generally, PLN recommends illegal electricity connections in the form of *by pass* or *levering*. PLN does not only provide advice to make illegal electricity connections. However, it is not uncommon to participate in making a direct connection from the Tenanga Listrik Network (JTL) to the Installation Owned by Tenanga Listrik Users (IMP) without ownership of kWh meters or with the ownership of kWh meters. The imitation of electricity theft given by PLN to perpetrators is generally motivated by compassion due to unfavorable economic conditions. However, this has violated the written rules in the Regulation of the Board of Directors of PT PLN (Persero) concerning the Control of Electricity Consumption (P2TL) number 088-Z chapter 2 article 2, namely;

> *"Each PLN unit routinely or specifically implements P2TL in order to regulate the distribution of electricity to avoid electricity hazards for the community, improve services and reduce shrinkage."*

The imitation of electricity theft carried out by PLN illustrates that PLN's duties and functions do not work properly in regulating electricity theft and reducing shrinkage rates. Inline with (Rao, 2001) research, where the electricity law failed to address the problem of electricity theft, especially failing to provide penalties and reduce the rate of electricity theft. In addition, criminal law rules are rarely applied to thieves who are caught or to perpetrators of collusion between employees of a distribution company and consumers. This is in line with electricity theft in Tanjung Burung Village, perpetrators of electricity theft can easily escape the punishment that will be obtained by paying a bribe to the electricity control officer.

Imitation of electricity theft also comes from someone who understands electricity or known as PLN kampung which generally offers services for all electrical needs and often advises customers to connect to illegal electricity. The recommendation for the installation of illegal electricity aims to make village PLN benefit in the form of wages from the services it has done. The wages paid are voluntary so that more and more people in Tanjung Burung Village use the services of PLN kampung for electricity purposes in their homes because of the cheap and affordable prices.

Expertise in the field of electricity owned by PLN kampung is obtained from imitation from previous actors. The imitation obtained by PLN village in Tanjung Burung Village came from a family that first did similar work. The imitation given is in the form of learning about

electricity, especially to connect illegal electricity. With the existence of the village PLN profession, it is very possible to continue to imitate electricity theft from one generation to the next. The imitation of electricity theft does not only come from people who understand electricity, but the imitation of electricity theft also comes from families and surrounding communities who first commit electricity theft. The imitation is in the form of information on how to commit electricity theft so that it can motivate people to continue to connect to illegal electricity, even some of the perpetrators do not have the motivation to connect to legal electricity

Akers' social learning theory shows that crime is transmitted in various ways and supported by weak electricity laws in Tanjung Burung Village, making more and more people commit crimes together and will occur continuously if electricity officials and law enforcement do not act firmly with the sanctions obtained by the perpetrators.

CONCLUSION

Based on research that has been done, electricity theft in Tanjung Burung Village began with imitating previous behavior obtained from various parties, both PLN, someone who understands electricity and even from people around who first committed electricity theft. Imitation is done because of the benefits obtained, some actors do not need to pay electricity bills or pay electricity bills at cheaper prices with large power consumption. This is also supported by weak laws or laws that do not work properly as a determining factor that electricity theft will continue to occur and will be easier to be carried out by various groups of society without any punishment or sanctions obtained. The rarer the consequences or punishments obtained, the more likely it will be that the behavior of electricity theft will continue to be carried out collectively and will grow if the electricity law does not work properly in Tanjung Burung Village.

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