

The Value of Honesty in Third-Grade Students at SDN Ngaliyan 05

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Article Info	Abstract
Keywords: Character, Elementary School, Honesty, Students	Corruption in Indonesia has become a systemic issue that not only causes economic losses but also undermines moral values and public trust. One of the root causes is the weak internalization of the value of honesty from an early age. This study aims to measure the level of honesty among elementary school students as an initial step toward building anti-corruption character from an early age. The research employed a mixed-methods approach, with third-grade students at SDN Ngaliyan 05 serving as the subjects. Data were collected through qualitative interviews with teachers and a closed quantitative questionnaire completed by 15 students. The results indicate that the students' level of honesty is categorized as moderate, with an average positive response rate of 79.16%. High values were demonstrated in aspects such as reporting peers who cheat (93.3%) and turning in found items (80%), yet weaknesses remain regarding the courage to admit mistakes (73.3%). This study concludes that although the value of honesty has begun to form, continuous reinforcement from both the school environment and the family is required to cultivate an honest character as the foundation of anti-corruption education.

INTRODUCTION

Corruption remains one of the crucial problems that continues to shackle the governmental system and social life in Indonesia. Etymologically, corruption signifies something corrupt, negative, and destructive (Darmayani et al., 2022). Corruption causes slowdowns in economic growth, declines in investment interest, increases in poverty rates, and widens the income gap (Pahlevi, 2022). Given the rampant cases of corruption in Indonesia, prevention efforts are insufficient if they only rely on severe punishments for corruptors; they also necessitate preventive actions such as anti-corruption education starting from elementary school, which teaches students to always be honest (Nestariana, 2023).

The future of the nation is determined by the current generation of children. Therefore, their character formed from an early age will significantly influence the nation's character in the future.

Shaping good children's character requires sufficient space for them to express themselves freely during their growth and development period (Narwanti, 2014). According to the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003, Article 3 concerning the national education system, national education functions to develop capabilities and shape a dignified national character and civilization in order to educate the nation's life. It aims to develop the potential of learners to become human beings who possess faith and piety toward God the Almighty, noble morals, health, knowledge, competence, creativity, independence, and to become democratic and responsible citizens. Considering these established functions and objectives, National Education must be oriented toward efforts to shape positive student character. Effective character education requires the instillation of core values from an early age, with honesty as one of the top priorities. Honesty in daily life is reflected in speech and actions that correspond to reality, without any elements of lies or deceit. This trait plays a vital role in building mutual trust and serves as the foundation for establishing solid and harmonious relationships (Jumadi, 2024). In the elementary school environment, the emphasis on honesty becomes an important investment in shaping students' character to be adaptive and ready to face the global era and future life challenges (Hariandi et al., 2020). In addition, the school also holds a central role in the internalization process of character values in students, including honesty (Sulisti Yorini, 2024).

On the other hand, active involvement from parents is required so that the formation of the child's character takes place consistently in the home environment. Therefore, an evaluation of the level of honesty among elementary school students becomes vital to understand the extent to which these values have been successfully instilled. This study aims to measure the level of honesty among elementary school students in Indonesia through a mixed-methods approach. This method combines qualitative interviews with teachers and a closed quantitative questionnaire distributed to third-grade students at SDN Ngaliyan 05. The results of this study are expected to provide an initial overview regarding the internalization of the value of honesty at the elementary level, while simultaneously serving as input for the development of more effective character education and anti-corruption education strategies in the future.

METHODS

This study employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods approach to comprehensively evaluate and measure the level of honesty among elementary school students at SDN Ngaliyan 05. The research combined both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods simultaneously to gain a broader and deeper understanding of the phenomenon. Quantitatively, a closed questionnaire was distributed to a sample of 15 third-grade students to measure their self-reported honesty across specific indicators, yielding statistical data analyzed through descriptive percentages. Concurrently, qualitative data were gathered through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with classroom teachers as key informants to contextualize the students' daily behavioral patterns and the school's value internalization strategies. The collected quantitative data were processed statistically, while the qualitative transcripts underwent thematic analysis involving data reduction and display. Finally, the findings from both methods were integrated and triangulated during the interpretation phase, ensuring data validity and providing a robust baseline for early anti-corruption character education strategies.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Informant: Third-Grade Homeroom Teacher

School Name: SDN Ngaliyan 05

Address: Jl. Raya Mr. Moch Ichsan, Wates, Ngaliyan District, Semarang City, Central Java
50189

Day/Date: Tuesday, April 15, 2025

Table 1. Interview Result

Questions	Answers
How do you define honesty within the educational context, particularly in the elementary school scope?	In my opinion, honesty is a heavy matter, and it must be habituated. I mean, before it becomes a habit, we must also be able to explain it to people and convey what honesty actually is. Furthermore, it comes down to self-awareness that needs to be nurtured through habituation; that is my view.
How often do you encounter cases of dishonesty in class? (e.g., cheating, lying)	It does not happen too frequently; it only occurs during certain moments. Fortunately, the children here are generally well-behaved, Alhamdulillah. Except, of course, during exams, which is a moment where dishonesty tends to surface. There was also a moment during the P5 (Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila) activity when we made Indonesian traditional food; many of them were dishonest because the food was so delicious that they did not want to share it. Perhaps the dishonesty is mostly between peers, not to the extent of lying to parents regarding finances for instance, claiming they need to pay for school expenses when they do not. Fortunately, no child has gone that far.
What methods do you usually employ to instill the value of honesty in the classroom?	First, I frequently use the lecturing method. I inform them, give positive affirmations, provide input, and ask for the students' opinions, such as "what do you think about honesty?: For example, there was a case involving one of my students regarding a traditional dance competition. It required a registration fee, which I was unaware of. Eventually, the makeup artist approached me and said, "Ma'am, your student hasn't paid me yet, even though I had already distributed the funds. I visited the student's home and discovered that the parents had indeed given the money, but it never reached the makeup artist". From that experience though it might seem flawed I use real-life cases as examples to show them the consequences. Coincidentally, one of my other students lives next door to that student. So, they knew about the family situation, and it was revealed that the parents had to borrow money from the neighbor's mother. In the end, we discussed it openly. It might have seemed like bullying, but that was never my intention; it was solely to create a deterrent effect so the student would feel remorseful, and others would not replicate such behavior.

Questions	Answers
What obstacles do you frequently encounter in instilling the value of honesty?	We do not fully know the true condition of the child. They might seem open, but we do not know what is actually happening. Instilling honesty is genuinely difficult because it requires habituation. Children nowadays, if I say that is a sin, they tend to argue back, saying what is a sin anyway? A sin is invisible, Ma'am. As a result, we have to shift our approach to using more realistic, tangible concepts.
Have you ever collaborated with parents regarding the children's honesty?	Not with all parents as a whole, only with the parents of the specific students involved.
How do you evaluate the level of honesty in children?	By cross-checking with the parents to align and verify what the child has stated. Relying solely on the child's statement is insufficient because the child might be lying; thus, the parents' role is highly necessary to prove the truth of the child's words.

Data Reduction Summary:

Table 2. Data Summary (Interview)

Aspects	Descriptions
Informant	Third-Grade Homeroom Teacher at SD Negeri Ngaliyan 05
Interview Date	Tuesday, April 15, 2025
1. Understanding of Honesty	Honesty is considered difficult to practice, yet essential to be habituated and understood by children. It is closely related to students' self-awareness.
2. Frequency of Dishonesty	Dishonesty rarely occurs, but it surfaces during specific moments such as exams and projects (P5). It is generally minor and occurs between peers.
3. Methods of Instilling Honesty	a. Lecturing and open discussions b. Utilizing relevant real-life case examples c. Affective approach and direct warnings
4. Obstacles in Instilling Honesty	Difficulty in knowing the actual condition since children can conceal the truth. Children also tend to refute abstract advice.
5. Collaboration with Parents	Collaboration is not yet widespread; it is only conducted during specific cases that directly involve the child.
6. Evaluation of Students' Honesty	a. Cross-checking the child's statements with information from parents b. Direct clarification regarding the child's stories or confessions

Questionnaire Results:

Number of Respondents: 15 students

Grade: 3

Table 3. Questionnaire Result

Questions	Options and Responses
In your opinion, does being honest mean telling the truth?	a. Agree (15 students) b. Do not know (0 students)
What will you do if you find it difficult to answer questions during an exam?	a. Do my best independently (10 students) b. Copy a friend's answers (1 student) c. Ask a friend for the answers (4 students)
What will you do if you find IDR 100,000.00 in the school yard?	a. Take it to buy snacks (1 student) b. Take it to top up Free Fire game credits (1 student) c. Take it to top up Mobile Legends game credits (1 student) d. Take it and hand it over to the teacher to be announced so the owner can claim it (12 students)
What will you do if a friend offers you money on the condition that you do not tell their mother that they swam in the river, because their mother might get angry?	a. Refuse the offer (12 students) b. Accept it because it is good to have money to buy snacks (2 students) *Note: 1 respondent did not answer this option
What will you do when you find out that your friend is cheating during an exam?	a. Report it to the teacher (14 students) b. Ignore it for fear of being called a snitch/cepu (1 student) c. Just ignore it (0 students) d. Not report it on the condition that the friend must share their exam answers (0 students)
What will you do if you accidentally break a glass at home?	a. Admit the mistake to father and mother (13 students) b. Say that the cat broke the glass to avoid getting scolded by parents (2 students)
Have you ever admitted to a mistake even though you might get punished?	a. Ever/Once in a while (8 students) b. Frequently (3 students) c. Never (4 students)
How do you feel when you are lied to by your friend	a. Indifferent / Feel normal (7 students) b. Sad (8 students)

Data Reduction Summary:

Table 4. Data Summary (Questionnaire)

Questions/Indicators	Positive Responses	Number of Students (out of 15)	Percentage (%)
Honesty means telling the truth	Agree	15	100%
Attitude during exams	Doing their best independently	10	66.7%
Finding money	Handing it over to the teacher	12	80%
Concealing the truth	Refusing to accept the money	12	80%
Peer cheating	Reporting it	14	93.3%
Breaking a glass	Admitting it to parents	13	86.7%
Admitting mistakes despite being punished	Ever / Frequently	11	73.3%
Feeling of being lied to	Sad	8	53.3%
Average			79.16%

Table 5. Percentage Category

Percentage Range(%)	Category
81 – 100%	High
61 – 80%	Moderate
≤ 60%	Low

The results of this study indicate that the level of honesty among third-grade students at SDN Ngaliyan 05 falls into the moderate category, with an average positive response rate of 79.16%. This finding indicates that the value of honesty has begun to take root within the students, although further reinforcement is still required, particularly regarding the courage to admit mistakes and the understanding of the consequences of dishonesty. Several indicators demonstrated positive outcomes. Specifically, 93.3% of the students were willing to report peers who cheat, and 80% would hand over found items to the teacher. This reflects that the majority of students have understood the importance of honesty in daily life, both in social contexts and personal responsibilities. On the other hand, only 73.3% of the students were willing to admit their mistakes when facing the risk of punishment, and only 53.3% felt sad when lied to. These percentages show that the affective aspects of honesty, such as empathy and moral awareness, still need to be enhanced.

The interview with the teacher provides a deeper perspective on the questionnaire results. The teacher stated that the practice of honesty among students is often situational. Cases of dishonesty typically surface during exams or group projects. The strategies employed to instill the value of honesty include lecturing, open discussions, and utilizing real-life case examples that are relatable to the students' lives. This approach is considered helpful in providing a concrete understanding of honesty. However, the teacher also revealed that evaluating students' honest behavior is not always straightforward, as children tend to conceal the truth. Furthermore, parental involvement in the character-building process has not yet run optimally, as they are usually only engaged during specific cases.

It is crucial to understand that the formation of anti-corruption character must be carried out from an early age. Effective honesty education needs to involve the process of value internalization through approaches that engage the students' cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects. Elementary schools, as the first formal educational environment, hold a vital role in this process. Character education is not solely the responsibility of the school; it also requires active support from the family so that the values of honesty can be applied consistently in the children's daily lives. Accordingly, the results of this study provide an initial overview that the internalization of the value of honesty is underway at the elementary level, despite persisting challenges in practice. These findings can serve as a reference in formulating more integrated and sustainable character education strategies to support the development of an anti-corruption culture from an early age.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the level of honesty among third-grade students at SDN Ngaliyan 05 falls into the moderate category, with an average positive response rate of 79.16%. Students have shown a fundamental understanding of the value of honesty, particularly in social contexts such as reporting peers who cheat or turning in found items. Nevertheless, the aspects of courage in admitting mistakes and empathy toward dishonesty still need to be enhanced. Efforts to instill the value of honesty at school have been implemented by teachers through various methods, including lecturing, discussions, and providing concrete examples. However, the success of character education cannot be separated from the active role of parents in the home environment. Collaboration between the school and the family remains the key to ensuring that honesty values are fully internalized within the child. The findings of this study serve as an important foundation for developing more effective character education and anti-corruption education strategies at the elementary school level. Reinforcing the value of honesty from an early age is expected to cultivate a generation of integrity and responsibility, capable of becoming part of the solution to eradicate the culture of corruption in the future.

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