

Revealing Honesty in Children through Game: A Case Study of Elementary School's Students in Banda Aceh

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Abstract: Exposure to honesty in young children is a need in order to evaluate how the concept is internalized in themselves. It has an impact on the formation of children's character in the future. This study aimed to reveal honest behavior in children. A total of 36 elementary school students consisting of 12 boys and 24 girls with aged 6 to 9 years old in Banda Aceh, Indonesia were selected as participants using random sampling. A ball-drawing task was used as a method to observe children's honesty, every child was asked to draw a ball from an opaque box containing equal numbers of red and blue balls, in a closed room with a hidden camera. The results showed that there were only 25% of elementary school students behaved honestly, while the other 75% behaved dishonestly. It means that only a small number of students act honestly. Follow-up is needed to provide education related to the value of honesty in children from an early age.

1 INTRODUCTION

Until 2022, Corruption has been major problem in Indonesia. Efforts in dealing with it are still being carried out by the government to break the chain of corruption. On the other hand, the rise of criminal acts as well as intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts that frequently appear in the media or daily life triggers social disharmony resulting in a moral crisis as we can observe today. These problems indirectly reflect the increasing neglect of good values in society, especially regarding honesty which is the root of other virtues. Building honest character involving a long and gradual process requires great attention from an early age. Meanwhile, attention to efforts in strengthening and inculcating the value of honesty from an early age as a preventive action is still insufficient. Likewise, studies on building honest character in children still receive little attention from experts, especially in small cities such as Banda Aceh, the capital of the westernmost province of Indonesia. The results of this study provide many benefits to the broader community, including parents, especially the government and related parties who design educational programs and strengthen the character of the younger generation. Therefore, studies on this topic are needed to collect important information on how honest behavior is described among children and its factors.

The human development perspective states that honesty is a central issue in moral development at the child stage. At this age, children learn through example and providing an understanding of the meaning of the values being taught. Family and school as the closest environment for children have an important role and cooperation in instilling and cultivating honesty values, especially through providing models or examples of honest behavior (Nodding, 1986). As a first step in studying honesty in children, it is necessary to first explore how children display honest behavior in their daily lives. This gives an idea of the extent to which children have understood and have an awareness of an honesty value (Schleifer & Martiny, 2006; Talwar, Lee, Lindsay, & Bala, 2004; Batson & Thompson, 2001). Information about honest behavior raised by children will be an important benchmark in mapping educational strategies that can be carried out by families and schools in building children's moral character from an early age.

This study is a descriptive study aiming to get an overview of honest behavior patterns among children at one of the public elementary schools in Banda Aceh. The school was selected due to the report from the school about the case of the loss of school cash which was caused by one of the students. This case encourages the need for special attention in further understanding how students

actually understand and reason morally so that it can be seen from the behavior displayed. As stated earlier, the age of children, precisely at the elementary school age, is a critical phase where children are easily absorb various information including quickly imitating the behaviors around them (Piaget, 1965). For this reason, it is necessary to observe children's behavior and provide assistance to correct behaviors that are not in accordance with religious teachings and community norms.

Observation of children's honest behavior requires direct experience to obtain accurate information, including through games. Play becomes the dominant activity at this age and becomes an effective medium for transferring value concepts in a fun and interactive way. One form of the game that is universal and can be played easily by children is the ball-drawing game. In this game, children will draw some colored balls in a closed box and room. Children will get prizes if they manage to take a ball with a certain color according to the specified. This game technique can be an effective medium for observing the honest behavior of children with surveillance on Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras. Measuring honest behavior with this method has been performed in a study in Singapore involving children aged 3 to 8 years to measure intrinsic honesty in children (He & Qin, 2020). This study presents an overview of the extent to which children display honest behavior through a ball-drawing game that are observed through surveillance cameras. This research is an initial study of the description of children's honest behavior that will be used as the basis for designing character education programs for children, especially at State X Elementary School in Banda Aceh.

2 METHODS

The population was the first to third grade students of State Elementary School X in Banda Aceh with an age range from 6 to 9 years old. A total of 36 students (consisting of 12 male students and 24 female students) selected using simple random sampling were involved as the research samples. Honesty behavior in the research was measured through ball games. This was done through a ball-drawing game modified by researchers based on the research by He and Qin (2020). The procedure for the game was that the child was given personal instructions to randomly draw the ball, which is in a dark square box of 20 balls, five times. Each of which was red and blue with the same number.

Previously, the children were also informed that those who got most drawn red balls would be prized. The children wrote the number of balls drawn based on their color on a sheet of paper that had been prepared by the research team. The draw was carried out in a closed room that could not be seen by anyone, but a surveillance camera was installed to assist the process of observing by the research team without the children's knowing. At the end of the research activity session, the research team debriefs the student about a complete understanding of the concept of honesty based on their behavior during the game. Some behaviors need correction in order that the children do not get positive reinforcement for their dishonesty.

3 RESULT

A total of 36 students of public elementary school in Banda Aceh, with an age from 6 to 9 years old were involved as samples in this study. Table 1 presents the distribution of subjects based on demographic information, namely gender, age, and grade.

Table 1. Demographics data of research sample (n=36)

Variable	n(%)
Gender	
Male	12 (33.33)
Female	24 (66.67)
Year (Old)	
6 th	1 (2.78)
7 th	14 (38.89)
8 th	5 (13.89)
9 th	16 (44.44)
Class Level	
1 st	16 (44.44)
2 nd	14 (38.89)
3 rd	6 (16.67)

Generally, Table 1 shows that most of the research subjects were female consisting of 24 students (66.67%). According to the age range, students aged 7 and 9 years were more dominant consisting of 14 students (38.89%) and 16 students (44.44%) respectively than students aged 6 and 8 years, only 1 subject (2.78%) and 5 subjects

respectively (13.89%). Based on the grade, almost all of the subjects were at first grade consisting of 16 students (44.44%) and second grade of 14 students (38.89%), while the rests were at third grade of elementary school.

Furthermore, table 2 provides more detailed information about the distribution of children's honest behavior based on gender, age, and grade using descriptive data analysis.

Tabel 2. Honest Behavior showed by the Children based on Demographic Data

Variable	Honesty		Total n (%)
	Honesty n (%)	Dishonesty n (%)	
Gender			
Male	5 (13.89)	7 (19.44)	12 (33.33)
Female	4 (11.11)	20 (55.26)	24 (66.67)
Year (Old)			
6 th	0	1 (2.78)	1 (2.78)
7 th	4 (11,11)	10 (27.78)	14 (38.89)
8 th	0	5 (13.89)	5(13.89)
9 th	5 (13.89)	11 (30.56)	16 (44.44)
Class's Level			
1 st	4 (11.11)	12(33,33)	16 (44,44)
2 nd	2 (5,56)	12 (33,33)	14 (38,89)
3 rd	3 (8,33)	3 (8,33)	6 (16,67)

Based on the table 2, only a small number of the subjects showed honest behavior consisting of only 9 students, the distribution of which between male and female was almost similar, namely 5 females (13.89%) and 4 males (11.11%). Meanwhile 7 (19.44%) males and 20 (55.26) females behaved dishonestly in the game. Likewise, if you look at the level of honesty of the students based on their age, the results of data analysis showed that only 4 students (11.11%) who were 7 years old and 5 students (13.89%) who were 9 years old showing honesty when playing ball-drawing game, while the rests, 27 students from the age of 6 years (2.78%), 7 years (27.78%), 8 years (13.89%), and 9 years (30.56%) cheated or played dishonestly, such as peeking the ball color in the box and exchange for a red ball when a draw results in a blue ball. Meanwhile, based on the grade, only 4 students (11.11%) from the first grade, 2 students (5.56%) from the second grade, and 3 students (8.33%) from the third grade were observed honest in the game, the other 27 students, 12 (33.33%) from the first and

second grad, and 3 students (8.33%) from the third grade displaying dishonest behavior according to CCTV observations. Overall the number of students who behaved honestly and dishonestly is clearly illustrated in Figure 1.

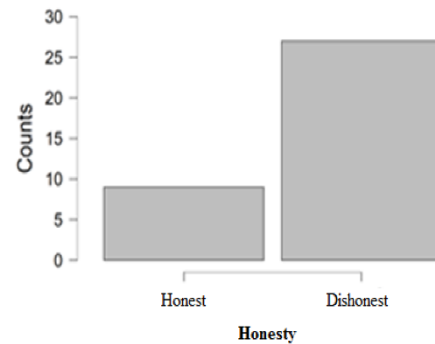


Figure 1. The level of honesty on elementary school students

Figure 1 describes the number of students who behaved honestly in State Elementary School X in Banda Aceh. Figure 1 shows that there were 9 students behaving honestly, while 27 others did the opposite.

4 DISCUSSION

This study was conducted as preliminary research due to the need for the assessment of the honesty concept among students, especially at one of the State Elementary Schools in Banda Aceh. The results of data analysis show that the subjects mostly displayed dishonesty based on observations when asked to play a ball-drawing game with prizes in a closed room. On the other hand, only little percentage of them play the game honestly. The same thing was also seen based on a review of gender, age, and grade in which the number of honest students was more considerable than the number of dishonestly-behaving students.

The findings of this study provide the real portrait that dishonesty is a crucial issue in early childhood. As the literature explains that children learn easily from observing the behavior of the people around them, especially family and school as their closest environment. Honesty is the result of knowledge and example instilled in children by adults around them. On the other hand, when children are exposed to many bad experiences, such as habituation of deceiving behavior and the consistent neglect from the closest individuals in

transferring the value of kindness, the child will be easy to cheat. Trust and honesty are difficult to grow in children who frequently face cheating, lying, or betrayal from the adults around them, especially in early childhood in which the attached figure of learning is parents. Children growing up witnessing cheating tend to form wrong perceptions of moral values that will have major impact on children and can result in shifting values in them. If children cannot recognize the line between cheating and honesty, they will grow up to be pragmatic and prone to negative influences.

Children are expected to know moral values, such as honesty. At this stage, a child is able to use various mental operations, such as reasoning to solve real problems. In addition, at this stage, the children's understanding of their experience is real. Instilling moral values in children cannot be done only through orders and prohibitions, however, the attached figure does so by growing awareness of them. The same thing was expressed by the Komite Pemberantasan Korupsi or Corruption Eradication Commission (2016), parents need to take special time to internalize the values of honesty in their children's lives and understand that children need support to dare to say the right thing and take action. In addition, the most important factor in building honest behavior and attitudes in children is the parents as their first role model.

An effort made in this study to follow up the findings is inviting children to enroll in Focus Group Discussions (FGD) about their experiences during the ball-drawing game. The research team asked the children how they still tried to play honestly. Moreover, through interactive and comfortable communication, the research team slowly led the children to admit if they were dishonest during the game. The research team also slowly directed the children to interpret the concepts of honesty and good behavior.

5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the study result, it can be concluded that there are 25% of students behave honestly in ball games, while the other 75% have dishonest behavior. The students who are dishonest in playing ball-drawing look directly into the box during the ball-drawing game to get red balls, so they would get many prizes. This game also indirectly explain that children may do anything to

get pleasure such as gifts even they have to act wrong. Changing this dishonest behavior requires an exemplary figure and proper assistance from the school and parents so that children can demonstrate honest behavior either in daily or larger activities. An exemplary figure is someone who becomes a role model and also a figure attached to children.

Further research is needed to understand the concept of honesty in children, starting from basic prevention activities, such as psychoeducation about honesty in children. In addition, further understanding is needed from the school to hold programs related to the inculcation of the concept of honesty from an early age through the education curriculum. Schools can also develop character education programs for their students.

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