

Local Wisdom as the Fundamental for Honest Behavior of Students in Aceh: A Social Psychology Study

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Abstract

Indonesian students uphold honesty every time they can. Aceh is one of Indonesia's regions that has grown with a culture of honesty and courage. This study aims to determine the Acehese students' honest behavior and to test it with a rating scale from the local community. This research was conducted using mixed methods, namely qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative data was earlier to collect honest behavior in the community and in-depth interview data on the elderly community. Meanwhile, quantitative data was distributed to 700 students in senior high schools from several areas of Aceh, such as Bireuen, Pidie, Banda Aceh, and Aceh Besar. The results showed that honesty in Acehese society was practiced and taught with habituation through Acehese poems. Meanwhile, honesty was closely related to courage for the local community and was divided into words, deeds, and circumstances. While quantitatively, the honest behavior of Acehese students was moderate. This study recommends paying attention to the old culture left by the ancestors, and the honest behavior associated with the fighting spirit is essential to be reintroduced to the students. The long history of the war in Aceh was caused by dishonesty to save lives. However, the 2004 tsunami, as a massive tragedy in Aceh, should gradually be able to restore Aceh's local wisdom, which is closely related to Islamic teachings (lage zat ngen sifeut).

Keywords: Honesty, Local Wisdom, Aceh Culture, student behavior.

INTRODUCTION

Honesty is a part of personality in psychology. Initially, from the 1980s until the early 20th century, personality descriptions comprised the prominent five personalities. These five factors were critical and could describe the average difference between humans (Izabela Sorić, Penezić, & Irena Burić, 2017). Then came a question due to incompleteness in the prominent five personalities, called honesty (Cervone & Pervin, 2012). So honesty is the sixth factor of personality (Zhu, 2019). The meaning of honesty from the psychological perspective has various views. Seligman and Peterson argued that honesty is not only limited to the technical meaning of telling the truth and what it is, but honesty is also a strength of character accompanied by responsibility for how a person manages feelings and keeps what he does following what he has chosen (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Meanwhile, Gerlach (2010) explained that honesty could cause physical or emotional pain, such as shame, guilt, rejection, fear, or loss. The two opinions above look different. One sees being honest as a positive matter, and the other witnesses that being honest can cause pain. The last opinion is different from the meaning of honesty in Islam because honesty gives a sense of security and peace of life.

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Children's habits of covering their feelings make them accustomed to dishonesty. So to encourage them, it is necessary to create a conducive, safe and comfortable atmosphere. Talking about a conducive environment to make someone honest has started since childhood. The family is the central part that can teach honest behavior to their children. Parents can provide security, trust, and honesty to their children and significant others. So honesty is also related to people's education around him. Anita E. Kelly, a Western Psychologist from the University of Notre Dame, thought that honesty is connected to health. According to her, Americans lie 1-2 times a day or 11 times a week and often experience health problems. She surveyed 110 people in America by creating control and experimental groups (No-lie groups).

The results showed that participants experienced improvements in their health, notably reduced headaches, sore throats, tension, and anxiety. In addition to sharing improved health, those who did not lie also experienced enhanced interpersonal relationships with others (Kelly & Wang, 2012). Therefore, honesty led to goodness and gave mental health to the perpetrators. Thus, this research also showed that dishonesty could be reduced or even removed from human life. Staats (2008) conducted a study entitled *Honesty and Heroes: A Positive Psychology View of Heroism and Academic Honesty*. He conducted experiments on several minority students who did not commit academic fraud at school. His two investigations concluded that students who could be honest were those who had the spirit of heroes and dared to face life, take risks with their results, and have empathy for others. These two traits could increase honesty in students. Lastly, honesty was close to assertiveness and positively affected building social relationships.

The opposite of honesty is a lie. Morrisani (2010) mentioned in his book that people lie because they avoid hurting or offending others, emphasize their greatness, avoid conflict, and speed up or slow down a relationship. Lying is tricky because there are liars who have anxieties and a lack of confidence. They worry that their lie will be exposed.

Dishonesty is still a severe problem and is increasingly concerning, which occurs in various fields, including economics (Tang, 2018), education (Simpson, 2016), justice and politics (Mocan, Bielen, & Marneffe, 2018), social (Sari & Sundari, 2016), and mass media (Suyanto, 2018). Dishonesty can significantly lead to corruption, especially in Indonesia. The Corruption Perception Index (CPI) showed that Indonesia's corruption rate in 2016 was 90 out of 176 countries (Ackerman & Palifka, 2018). Although the Corruption Eradication Committee (KPK) has been formed, it has not been appropriately resolved.

Another dishonesty problem is cheating that occurs in the academic world. Many students cheat during exams or plagiarize other students' work to complete final assignments (Burke & Sanney, 2018). Several recent

studies have shown that there has been much academic cheating on campus. Uyun's research (2016) in Palembang, Widiyanto, and Priatna Sari's research on accounting students (2017), Saidina's research (2017), and others showed an increasing level of dishonesty in the academic world.

Cheating in school exams, especially in high school, has been expected. They dare to be dishonest to get a high score in the national examination and continue their education in higher education. Zubin Austin et al. (2005) also proved that educational dishonesty is alarming. However, one country is almost free from dishonesty, namely Denmark. The population lives in prosperity, and the country is free from corruption (Hidayat, 2017). Citizens' honesty can make the country progress, and the life of the people and the country will prosper.

Dishonesty issues have tremendous implications in life. Individuals who always cheat on exams will grow up to be someone who is not creative and productive because they are used to copy-paste culture (Fusch, 2017). They become second-tier humans, do not dare to face reality, and lose true happiness (Bashori, 2018). A study showed that people who lie are sick (Kelly & Wang, 2012). Honesty gives genuine pleasure (Torka, 2018). According to research by Stanley (2001), the most crucial factor that makes people successful is honesty. Unfortunately, cheating in education is increasing—this separated academic anxiety for education observers and researchers who pay attention to the issue.

Several researchers appeared to design several test models to determine an exam's honesty. Michael M. Harris & Paul R. Sackett developed the Personnel Selection Inventory (PSI) model (Harris & Sackett, 1987). Amin developed honesty tests in industry, organizations, and education (Amin & Kelly, 2000). Popham (1993) conducted a study to improve honesty by utilizing the Inaccessible Coding System (ICS). Winarto (2012) developed a Computerized Adaptive Testing Triangel Decision Tree (CAT-TDT) software based on an internet network (web-based) to increase honesty in evaluating learning in schools. The number of test kits designed to test honesty proved the increasing level of dishonesty in academics today.

This issue invites questions about why academic fraud and lies still occur in educational institutions. Corruption practices are also carried out by those who have taken higher education (Znoj, 2017). Meanwhile, education from kindergarten to high school in religious studies, social studies, citizenship, and even Indonesian language subject teach ethical values. Is there something wrong with Indonesia's education system in shaping the character of the nation's children through education in schools? While the government has designed character education with various materials and methods in educational institutions, many phenomena still violate this nation's character.

According to several researchers, academic dishonesty occurs due to a lack of supervision during exams, the environment, and friends (DiVall, 2016). Likewise, answers to difficult

exams, lack of confidence, the desire to get high scores, and low faith trigger a student to cheat in exams (Nursalam, 2013). Blachnio and Weremko (2012) stated that dishonesty, especially academic dishonesty, can develop and affect others like a contagious disease.

Looking at the problems above, instilling the value of honesty in the educational environment is tricky. There are many challenges to tackle. Family, parents, and friends influence a student to cheat in an exam. Local culture can have a significant influence on shaping one's behavior. Planned Behavior theory and Bronfenbrenner have concluded that local culture can influence an individual's behavior. Culture and local wisdom as a community's identity can be used as a positive provocateur that can help lead the local community to the direction of behavior formation, in this case, honest behavior.

Each tribe and region has its cultural customs. All these cultures have their meaning for the local community. Culture for a tribe also has goals and philosophical history. Indonesia has 700 ethnic groups spread over 34 provinces. A region's culture also describes the character of a particular region or province. One of the provinces in Indonesia that has a unique culture is Aceh. Aceh or Serambi Mekah, or the Terrace of Mecca, has gone through many problems, from prolonged conflict to earthquake and tsunami in 2004. Aceh people are famous for their toughness and bravery. Many fighters and heroes came from Aceh, such as Cut Nyak Dhien, Cut Mutia, and Teuku Umar. The Tung Bala culture in Acehese society shows that they are brave and dare to do what is right. Aceh people are also known to be honest with the words "kiban crah meunan begah, sulet keu jet keu pangkai tente kanjai jet ke laba," symbolized by rencong pinned in front. However, after a prolonged conflict, many migrants complained that some people were not honest.

Wars and conflicts require communities to lie for security reasons. So this habit sticks to daily life. History also taught people to lie with immigrants and be careful when speaking for fear. This dishonesty culture, of course, should stop. The war is over, and it is time for honesty to return to the nation's character so Indonesia can become a dignified nation. Schools are institutions that play the most role in educating students about honest behavior. Therefore, this research aims to restore local wisdom in Aceh, which plays a role in forming students' honest attitudes.

Method

This study used field research and mixed methods analysis using two qualitative and quantitative methods (Creswell, 2012). In mixed methods, when one of the existing methods is considered less able to explain the phenomenon to be revealed, then two ways are used simultaneously, which helps complement each other or cover their shortcomings. The researcher chose this method based on the research questions, the problem constraints contained in the research

problem's background, and the problem's complexity. This mixed methods research conducts a study assuming that collecting various types of data considered the best can provide a comprehensive understanding of the problem under investigation.

This research began with a broad survey so that generalizations could be made on the research results from a predetermined population. Then, an open interview was conducted at the next stage to collect the participants' views (Creswell, 2012). This research was conducted using mixed methods, namely qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative data was used earlier to collect real meaning in the community and in-depth interview data on the elderly community. Quantitative data was collected by distributing questionnaires to 700 students in senior high schools in several areas of Aceh, namely Bireuen, Pidie, Banda Aceh, and Aceh Besar. Qualitative research data was analyzed by reducing data, displaying data, and drawing conclusions.

Meanwhile, quantitative data analysis was analyzed using SPSS. The preparation of the honesty scale was based on interviews conducted with informants who understood Acehese culture related to honest behavior. The scaling model used is referred to as the Likert scaling model, which consists of 5 options: strongly agree (SA), agree (A), Neutral (N), disagree (D), and strongly disagree (SD). The score range for each statement ranged from 1-5 by considering the item's nature (favorable or unfavorable).

Result and Discussion

Qualitative data obtained through in-depth interviews with the people of Aceh found several essential points about honesty. After the interview, the results were thematically arranged to display the data more clearly. The interview results found the meaning of honesty, the division of honesty, and honesty education in the family and society. Some informants defined 'honesty' differently but had almost the same purpose. Honesty is doing what is right, including attitude, words, and deeds (P.1). The meaning and honest distribution were found. Honesty is essential, for saying what it is, according to words with actions (P.4). From here, reinforcement on the honest side of speech was discovered.

Honesty means expressing what the heart feels, not lying to oneself or one's conscience, and being expressed sincerely (P.6). honesty focuses on defining what is thought or intended. Thus, being honest is speaking according to reality, heart, or circumstances. Some informants gave different meanings in their editorials but had the same purpose. The difference is the level of significance provided. Overall honest expressions in Acehese culture have 3 aspects. These three aspects can then be drawn as indicators and lowered into questionnaire items for later distribution to students, as described below.

No.	Aspect	Indicator
1	<i>Narit</i>	Words according to actual events
2	<i>Buet</i>	1. Actions according to rules 2. Actions according to what has been promised
3	Situation	Intentions according to physical abilities

Honesty has been taught since childhood to children through Acehese proverbs. *Meno pijeet na lam slaughter, so gandai na lam lungkiek pha, meno suleet taboeh keu pangkai, ka teunte kanjai ta tung keulaba*. The statement means that if a business begins with a lie, then what is found is shame and failure. These words are presented in a form like a rhyme that is easy to remember and has a deep meaning. Statements like these strengthen themselves and the local community to prohibit cheating or lying. Another example of a similar sentence is *mengoe suleet meupaleet*, meaning lying keeps one away from success. Finding the sound of similar words with different meanings is a strength.

Honesty is a religious commandment, and lying is prohibited in Islam. Aceh is an Indonesian territory that applies Islamic law (Jailani, M. R., & Mohamad, M. T. 2019). The customs that apply in everyday life are Islamic teachings. So there is a saying that in Aceh, the law and custom of *lage zat ngen sifeut*, or religious law with customs such as substances and their nature, means it is difficult to separate (Misran, M. (2020). Likewise, the ethical culture practiced since ancient times is Islamic values.

Many words are presented by the community, especially by parents in the past, about honesty. Words about honesty are presented as verses with beautiful words and have deep

meanings. Regarding the education pattern in Islam, education is shown with verses (Is, B. (2021). The Qur'an is filled with miracles, and its verses display beautiful allegories that stick firmly in the soul and make it easier for readers to understand, accept, and apply the meanings (Marlion, F. A., & Wijayanti, T. Y. (2019). Another example of a sentence that states the importance of being honest is found in the following terms.

Lage tapeugah menan tapubut, lage tapubut meunan ta peugah/ bagaimana anda bicara begitulah seharusnya anda perbuat sebaliknya seperti apa yang anda lakukan begitulah yang harus ada ucapkan. Kiban crah meunan beukah/ bagaimana bentuk retaknya begitulah bentuk terbelahnya, (bagaimana yang di dalam begitulah yang dilahirkan dalam bentuk prilaku). Ureung nyang galak peugah jujur meuteumee lhe hai: dipeucaya, galak, dan rasa tabeek. Ada 3 hal yang diperoleh dengan kejujuran yaitu dipercaya orang, disenangi dan di sengani oleh orang. Peuneugah nyang jujur lebeh meuyum daripada hareuta warisan nek tu/ kejujuran lebih berharga dari harta warisan nenek moyang. Bajalan Luruh, Bakato Bana / berjalan lurus berkata benar

Lage tapeugah menan tapubut, lage tapubut meunan ta peugah/ how you speak is how you should do otherwise, like what you do is what you have to say. Kiban crah meunan beukah/ how the inside is what is born in the form of behavior. Ureung nyang galak peugah jujur meuteumee lhe hai: dipeucaya, galak, dan rasa tabeek. Peuneugah nyang jujur lebeh meuyum daripada hareuta warisan nek tu/honesty is more valuable than the ancestors' inheritance. Bajalan Luruh, Bakato Bana / walking straight; telling the truth.

The overall results collected after analyzing the honesty construct from the local community are compiled in a questionnaire with favorable and unfavorable in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of Honesty Scale Items

No.	Aspect	Favorable	Unfavorable	Total
1	Words	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	6, 7, 8, 9, 10	10
2	Deeds	11, 12, 13, 14, 15	16, 17, 18, 19, 20	10
3	Situation	21, 22, 23, 24, 25	26, 27, 28, 29, 30	10
	Total	15	15	30

The questionnaire compiled in Table 2 was distributed to 700 students in 4 districts in Aceh. All respondents felt guilty when they lied (100%). All respondents also admitted that they had been taught about honesty since childhood (100%). Four hundred forty-three (443) respondents stated that honesty should be kept secret or only Allah SWT could know (63,46%), and 257 students said that honesty must be shown so that others could follow the example (36.54%). The results found by interview and quantitative results had slight differences. The parents interviewed hoped this ethical culture would be firmly attached to the next

generation by drawing closer to Allah. Islam requires its people to be honest (Suud, F. 2017) and honest enough for Allah to know it. Honesty needs to be shown so that others can imitate it. Of course, this possibility may be influenced by different age ranges, so they think differently. Still, students realized and admitted that honesty was essential.

Conclusion

Three factors influence students' honesty in schools based on Aceh's local culture. First, honesty is a religious requirement,

and second, the value of the national character applies everywhere. Third, an honest attitude manifests many other positive traits, such as creativity, independence, courage, responsibility, assertiveness, confidence, toughness, accepting reality, curiosity, self-control, hard work, and calmness. Honesty becomes a motivational value for its worshippers. Based on the results, schools should have a strong foundation of moral education. One of the strong foundations is from the local culture because they have sacred, deep, and robust meanings to enforce. The community found that honesty in Aceh has been inserted in many rhymes and words of wisdom. However, the habit is starting to fade. Honesty is a habit that should be preserved to restore the strength of local culture. There should be teaching that does not tolerate various forms of cheating. Honesty also synchs with the Acehnese people's courage culture.

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