



The role of learning creed and morals in preventing lying behavior in kindergarten children in Semarang City

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ABSTRACT

Lying tendencies in young children are a prevalent concern that may arise from insufficient cognitive awareness, anxiety over repercussions, or inadequate moral instruction. This study explores how teachings of *Aqidah* Akhlak can be utilized as a proactive measure against dishonesty in pre-schoolers residing in Semarang City. Employing a qualitative descriptive framework, the research encompasses direct observations, discussions with educators and parents, and an analysis of educational documents. Results indicate that truthfulness can be nurtured effectively through narratives, music, and dramatization that highlight moral teachings. A nurturing educational atmosphere coupled with ongoing cooperation between teachers and families is vital for reinforcing these principles. Nonetheless, the challenge remains in maintaining consistency and distinguishing between creative expressions and lies. This research emphasizes the significance of embedding moral education into everyday classroom interactions to foster honesty from a young age.



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INTRODUCTION

Etymologically, the term *akidah* comes from the words '*aqoda*, '*ya'qidu*, '*aqdan*, '*itiqoodaan*, which indicate: belief in the heart or deep faith. The definition of *akidah* in a specific context is explained by scholars, such as Imam Al-Ghazali, who states that when *akidah* develops in the soul of a Muslim, they will feel that only Allah has the highest authority, while everything else that exists is merely a creation.

From a linguistic perspective, the meaning of *akhlak* is derived from the Arabic word meaning: behavior, character, habit (from the root word *khuluqun*), and can also refer to creation, work, and creation (from the root word *khalqun*). In terms of the technical definition of *akhlak*, many scholars have provided explanations, one of whom is Ibn Maskawaih in his book *Tahdzib Al-Akhlak*, who explains that *akhlak* is the condition of an individual's soul that drives them to act without first thinking or considering. Furthermore, Imam Al-Ghazali in his work *Ihya' Ulum Al-Din* states that *akhlak* is the representation of behavior in the soul, which results in actions being carried out easily without the need for analysis or thought.

Understanding of *aqidah* according to terminology, Hasan al-Banna explains that *aqidah* is a number of things that must be confirmed as true by the human heart, provide peace of mind, and become a belief that is completely free from doubt (Wardani & Afandi, 2023). Meanwhile, according to Abu Bakar Jabir al-Jazairy quoted by Yunahar Ilyas, *aqidah* is interpreted as a collection of truths that can generally be accepted by humans based on reason, revelation, and nature. This truth is embedded in the human heart and is believed to be true with certainty, and rejects anything that is contrary to that truth (Istikhoma et al., 2024). Morals refer to a person's actions that are triggered by their mental condition, where these actions are carried out without prior consideration (Mutia & Muzakki, 2024).

The process of instilling noble values in children through the transfer of knowledge, based on the beliefs or convictions of a Muslim derived from Islamic teachings, which every Muslim must uphold as a strong and fundamental foundation. Such actions must be deeply ingrained in an individual until they become part of their identity, enabling them to be carried out effortlessly without internal deliberation, free from external pressure or coercion, and performed with sincerity, not merely as pretense, fantasy, or play.

According moral and religious education is a learning process aimed at achieving good behavior, both physically and mentally, so that individuals become harmonious human beings, both toward themselves and others. Moral and religious education plays an important role in providing students with the basic skills and abilities needed to enhance knowledge, understanding, experience, and appreciation, particularly in the development of Islamic religious character and exemplary values in daily activities.

Learning of faith and morals is one of the important elements related to children's education. with the learning of faith and morals, it is hoped that it can direct children to behave well or have good morals. the good and bad learning of faith and morals will have an impact on student behavior, because schools play a role in supporting the development of a child's character. The success or failure of the learning process can be seen through the shift in behavior experienced by students, from previously not understanding to understanding, from bad to good, as well as the application of noble morals in daily activities (Supriatna & Rahayu, 2021).

State that a lie is inaccurate information provided by the perpetrator for a specific purpose. A tendency is understood as something that motivates an individual to act. Meanwhile according to Endah in (Hendarwati et al., 2019). Parents have an important role in building children's character so that children grow into honest individuals. One method to achieve this is to show honesty to children from an early age. If we often lie, children will automatically assume that dishonest behavior is common and acceptable.

According to Agustin, the reasons why children can lie or be dishonest, such as: children lie to observe the reactions of the people they are talking to. Children can also lie to exaggerate themselves, which is done deliberately to increase self-confidence in the eyes of their peers, while hoping to gain recognition from them. Lies can also arise due to the rapid development of imagination, which is often referred to as small lies. In addition, children can lie to hide their own actions. Lies can also occur because children imitate the lying behavior of others, or because of the desire to get praise (Inten, 2017).

Previous studies have shown that lying habits in children can emerge at an early age and develop as their thinking abilities and social interactions grow. For example, research conducted by Talwar and Lee (2008) shows that children begin to learn to lie as a way to avoid punishment or get something they want, even before they enter primary school. Other studies explain that factors such as family conditions, parenting styles that are too permissive or too authoritarian, and a lack of consistent guidance on moral values are the main causes of the development of lying habits in children (Talwar & Lee, 2008).

Honesty is something that is very important and valuable in every aspect of life. Likewise in the context of family and society, honesty is very much needed so that the family ties that have been established can be maintained and built well. If honesty is not applied in the family, then what will arise is conflict, and in the end family relationships will become strained and damaged. Faith and morality play a crucial role in the development of children's attitudes and behavior. At this stage, children undergo rapid cognitive, emotional, and social growth. Therefore, teachings of belief and moral values form the foundation of character structure based on faith and morality during childhood (Alpiana, 2021).

One proven effective method for conveying good morality at an early age is the use of exemplary narratives and educational songs containing moral messages. Children tend to accept light-hearted messages that can be conveyed to their world through engaging and relevant media. Songs with themes of honesty, responsibility, and mutual respect can be an efficient way to promote positive behavior in children. The success or failure of the learning process can be seen through the shift in

behavior experienced by students, from previously not understanding to understanding, from bad to good, as well as the application of noble morals in daily activities (Ansori, 2021).

Benefits of speaking honestly Lazuardi explains that there are several types of benefits from honesty, including: Feelings and heart become peaceful, receiving rewards for kindness, being appreciated by others, receiving blessings in every effort made, avoiding all dangers, and having many friends. Apply in daily activities, explanations about theories or narratives about honest attitudes alone are not enough to educate and develop honest values in children, this is also very important to be realized in daily routines. This is because children need real examples in their perspective. Therefore, start to display honest attitudes and behaviors in daily activities, such as applying them in words and actions in everyday life (Agustina & Suryadi, 2023).

In practice, moral development is not only established through teaching, but also through habits and examples. For example, if a child is punished for negative behavior such as lying, conflict with friends, or indecisiveness, educators or parents will not immediately punish them. Instead, they offer gentle yet firm guidance. This advice is intended to help children reflect on their mistakes, acknowledge their actions, and apologize to their hurt friends.

This approach is both emotional and educational. Children learn that every action has consequences and that they must take responsibility for their actions. This process enhances children's moral awareness, encouraging them to do good not only because they are told to, but also because they recognize the importance of their actions. The use of trust and moral values is an effective strategy for communicating good morals at a young age, reinforced by advice and habits. This not only plays a role in shaping individual character, but also creates a harmonious social environment and fosters empathy for the future.

The uniqueness of this study lies in the application of belief-based learning as the foundation for shaping beliefs combined with the instillation of moral values, particularly honesty, in children's daily lives. This study does not only focus on delivering material about honesty, but also emphasizes the importance of accustoming children to behave honestly through examples and role models at home and at school.

Additionally, this research highlights that collaboration between teachers and parents plays a crucial role in preventing dishonest behavior among children in Semarang City. The educational model applied in this study has rarely been explored in previous studies, especially those discussing efforts to instill the value of honesty in children through integrated religious and moral education combined with daily habits.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through interviews, observation, and documentation. Participant observation was conducted with the aim of directly observing the process of learning faith and morals in early childhood environments, as well as student behavior related to the value of honesty. This research was conducted at Husna Jaya Kindergarten, an early childhood education institution committed to shaping Islamic character from an early age. During the observation activities, the researcher participated in various classroom activities to see firsthand how religious and moral education is implemented in the learning routine.

The main focus of the observation was to see the methods used by teachers in teaching religious and moral education to instill the value of honesty in students. The researcher noted the approaches, media, and strategies used by teachers in delivering the material, as well as how the children responded to the learning process. Additionally, the observation also focused on the children's actual behavior in their daily lives, both during the teaching-learning process and outside the classroom, such as when playing or interacting with peers, or when communicating with teachers. Special attention is given to behavior that reflects honesty or the opposite, as part of the indicators of successful moral education.

The learning environment at Husna Jaya Kindergarten is also an important focus of observation. Researchers observe the school atmosphere, the relationship between teachers and students, and the

social norms that apply within it. A positive and supportive environment, especially one that rewards honest behavior and provides children with opportunities to express themselves safely, is believed to have a significant influence on the formation of honest character in young children.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore information that could not be obtained through observation. The key informants in these interviews were the akidah akhlak teachers and the students' parents. Teachers provided information about the curriculum used, the teaching methods they considered effective in instilling the value of honesty, and the challenges they faced during the learning process. Interviews with parents provided additional perspectives on how children behaved at home, whether they showed signs of understanding and applying the value of honesty as taught at school.

Documentation complements other data collection methods. Researchers collected supporting documents such as textbooks and teaching materials used in akidah akhlak learning, student attendance records, and photographic documentation of learning activities in the classroom. All of this data provides physical evidence that helps to reinforce the results of observations and interviews, while also providing a complete picture of how *aqidah akhlak* education is carried out at Husna Jaya Kindergarten.

In analyzing the data, the researcher employs a qualitative descriptive approach consisting of three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The reduction process was carried out by filtering and summarizing the data in accordance with the research focus. The reduced data was then presented in a structured narrative form, accompanied by tables or diagrams where necessary. From the results of the data presentation, the researcher drew conclusions based on emerging patterns, while remaining open to the possibility of revision during the research process.

This research was conducted in accordance with ethical principles. The researcher obtained official permission from TK Husna Jaya and clearly communicated the research objectives. The confidentiality of all informants' identities was maintained, and the research was conducted in a manner that did not harm or cause discomfort to the research subjects. With this careful approach, the research is expected to make a real contribution to the development of character education, particularly in instilling the value of honesty through akidah akhlak education in early childhood.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The role of Akidah Akhlak learning in preventing lying behavior in early childhood at Husna Jaya Kindergarten is a complex and important study. Honesty, as a fundamental moral foundation, must be instilled from an early age to shape children's strong and integrity-based character. In the city of Semarang, with its diverse societal dynamics, preventing lying behavior in young children (YCC) at kindergarten (TK) presents a challenge that requires a holistic and integrated approach. Character education rooted in religious and cultural values plays a crucial role in fostering honesty and preventing lying behavior (Mulia, 2020)

Understanding the root causes of lying behavior in young children is an important first step. Children may lie because they are afraid of punishment, want attention, do not understand the consequences of their actions, or are influenced by their surroundings. Limited cognitive development and psychological factors can also be causes. Therefore, a comprehensive approach is needed to address the root of this problem (Rokhanasari, 2014)

Teaching religious beliefs and morals is not just about verbally conveying religious teachings, but must be realized in practice and real experiences. Inspirational Islamic stories featuring characters who are honest and brave enough to admit their mistakes can be an effective learning medium. These stories should be told in simple language that is easy for children to understand, accompanied by fun interactive activities. Role-playing, for example, can help children understand the consequences of lying and the importance of being honest in various situations. Through this activity, they can practice how to respond to situations that require honesty (Hendarwati, 2019).

A conducive and supportive learning environment is very important. Teachers must create a safe and comfortable classroom atmosphere where children feel free to express their opinions and feelings without fear of punishment (Hidayah, 2017). Teachers must also be good role models, always

speaking honestly and acting fairly. Positive reinforcement, such as giving praise and rewards for honesty, is very important to motivate children. Collaboration between teachers, parents, and the community is crucial. Teachers need to communicate effectively with parents to understand the child's home environment and provide appropriate guidance. Parents must also play an active role in educating children at home, setting a good example, and providing consistent consequences for lying. The surrounding community can also play a role in creating an environment that supports honesty (Rokhanasari, 2014).

However, the implementation of learning *aqidah* and *akhlak* is not always easy. Lack of teacher understanding of effective learning methods, limited resources, differences in cultural and religious backgrounds, and consistency in implementing honesty values can be obstacles. To overcome this, improving the quality of teacher training, developing an integrated curriculum, utilizing information and communication technology, collaboration with parents and the community, and regular research and evaluation are needed.

A holistic and integrated approach, involving various parties and utilizing various learning methods, is the key to the success of preventing lying behavior in early childhood in kindergartens in Semarang City. Thus, children can grow into honest, integrity-based, and responsible individuals, as well as become quality future generations of the nation. The formation of an honest character from an early age is a long-term investment to build a better and more civilized society. Honesty is not just a moral value, but the main foundation for a harmonious and sustainable life. Efforts to prevent lying behavior in early childhood in kindergartens in Husna Jaya City are an important step in building a brighter future for the next generation (Tundru, 2020).

Teaching children about the truth from an early age is crucial because it will shape the child's character to be trustworthy. Sowing the principle of honesty in children is not an easy endeavor because there are currently many examples of cheating behavior. Giving clear praise will motivate children to make honesty a value held in everyday life (Anam & Achadi, 2023).

According to Ajeng in describes individuals who have honesty. 1) When choosing to do an action, the choice is right and provides benefits. 2) When someone promises, he will not cheat. 3) There is a match between his words and behavior. Individual personality cannot be separated from various external factors that influence them. There are at least three important factors that play a role in the design of a person's personality (Hutahaeen, 2007). First, the individual's genetic factors. Second, the first family experience. And third, important events outside the home in the future. Thus, personality patterns are not only formed from training or genetic inheritance. Instead, it emerges from a combination of interactions between the two aspects.

One of the main factors causing moral decline is the loss of religious teachings in individuals. When a person does not have a deep and real understanding of the principles of his religion, he is at risk of losing his guidelines for behaving. However, religious teachings can function as a guide and supervisor in thinking, speaking, and behaving. A child who is taught religious values properly from an early age will have clear boundaries between good and bad (Ardiansyah et al., 2024).

Factors that influence negative personality

“learning aqidah akhlak is taught by doing the activity of reading asmaul husna and its meaning after doing dhuha prayer, this activity is carried out together” (Interview with teacher N).

During the observation, several incidents of children lying were recorded, generally related to toys or food. For example, children lied about who broke a toy or who ate the cake first. The lies tended to be simple and spontaneous. The teacher provided explanations and guidance to children who lied, emphasizing the importance of honesty and the consequences of lying. The teacher also provided examples of honest behavior through stories and daily activities. In general, children tend to be honest in simple activities, such as admitting mistakes or returning items that do not belong to them.

The observed instances of children's lying behavior, often simple and spontaneous and related to avoiding minor consequences like admitting who broke a toy or ate a cake, are consistent with

existing literature. For example, Talwar and Lee (2008)'s foundational research indicates that children begin to develop lying habits at an early age, frequently as a strategy to evade punishment or fulfill a desire. Similarly, the various motivations for lying identified in this study, such as seeking attention or imitating surrounding behavior, resonate with Agustin's findings (Inten, 2017), which highlight factors like a desire for praise or hiding actions. While our observations align with these established patterns of lying in early childhood, this study further explores how specific Akidah Akhlak learning approaches, integrated into daily routines, are employed to address these behaviors.

Faith and moral education is a fundamental aspect in the formation of children's character from an early age. At this time, children are in a very rapid development phase both physically, cognitively, and emotionally. Therefore, this period is the right time to instill Islamic values, especially true faith and noble morals. One of the despicable morals that often appears in children is lying. This habit, if not handled early on, can be carried over into adulthood and have a negative impact on a person's social and spiritual life.

Media and Artworks that Ignore Moral Values Many television programs, films, books, and games contain negative elements without considering their influence on children's moral development. This media seems to encourage the younger generation to follow their desires and passions without control. Without filtering and direction, children tend to imitate what they see or read, which can ultimately lead them to deviant behavior (Sari et al., 2023).

Lying behavior in children usually appears as a form of avoiding punishment, to get attention, or as a result of imitation of the surrounding environment. Akhlak education has an important role in guiding children to recognize good and bad deeds based on Islamic teachings. When children are taught that honesty is part of faith and that Allah SWT knows everything, then gradually children will internalize the value of honesty as a principle of life (Mudianti & Cahyo, 2024).

Good akhlak education starts from the family environment. Parents are the first and foremost teachers for children. In the family environment, children learn from the behavior and words of their parents. Therefore, it is important for parents to set a good example in speaking and behaving honestly. When parents are consistent, provide explanations in a gentle manner, and give appreciation when children tell the truth, then children will feel appreciated and will be more motivated to always tell the truth.

"Telling the praiseworthy character of prophet muhammad saw, he is a patient prophet, he speaks well, and never hates people. in terms of telling stories, not only the story of the prophet is conveyed but also tells of friends who have done good behavior such as honesty, patience, willingness to share, and not getting angry." (Interview with teacher N).

In the school environment, teachers play an important role in instilling the values of akhlak and akhlak. Teachers are not only educators, but also role models for children. Through fun learning, such as storytelling, role-playing, singing, and project activities, teachers can insert the values of honesty and the dangers of lying. For example, through the story of the Prophet Muhammad SAW who is known for his honesty (Al-Amin), children are invited to emulate him in their daily lives (Wuryandani et al., 2018).

Effective moral education also involves the emotional aspects of children. Early childhood tends to think egocentrically, so they need to be guided to understand the impact of their actions on others. When children understand that lying can hurt other people's feelings, damage trust, and be disliked by Allah, they will begin to consider their actions before acting.

"In the habit of telling the truth, the teacher asks questions to children such as "son, have you done the magazine well?, try to see the results" from here the teacher knows whether the child is honest or not, when honest is given appreciation and when lying is given advice and given an example to tell the truth" (Interview with teacher N).

The application of positive discipline is very important in supporting the process of character formation in children. Harsh punishment or intimidating attitudes can actually make children lie more often because they are afraid of being punished. On the other hand, when children are given the

opportunity to admit mistakes without fear of being punished excessively, they will learn that honesty is better than hiding mistakes. Thus, moral education must be delivered in a gentle but firm manner, so that children feel emotionally safe (Sari et al., 2023).

A supportive school environment is also a determining factor in the success of moral education. Schools that instill a culture of honesty, value honesty, and create a religious atmosphere will provide positive stimulus for the development of children's morals. Routine activities such as praying together, reading hadiths or verses from the Qur'an about honesty, and giving awards for honest behavior can strengthen children's habits of being honest.

Collaboration between teachers and parents is a crucial foundation in developing a child's character as a whole. When ethical principles introduced in school are supported at home, children will have a stable and rewarding learning experience. Good communication between teachers and parents also makes it easier to identify and address inappropriate behaviors, such as lying, quickly and accurately through mutually beneficial cooperation.

Morals education does not only convey abstract concepts, but must also be linked to children's real experiences. Children need to be involved in light discussions about honesty, given the opportunity to share experiences, and invited to reflect on their feelings after doing an act. Activities such as playing dramas about honesty, making picture stories, or writing down happy honest experiences can be effective means of strengthening moral values.

It is also important to instill the spiritual understanding that God always sees what humans do, even if no one else is watching. As this spiritual awareness develops, children will have stronger self-control. They will no longer tell the truth simply because they are afraid of being punished, but because they realize that honesty is a form of devotion to God.(Mulia, 2020).

"Children's understanding of lying is not good as far as / stage reminding their friends who lie, for example "there is one child who made a mistake but does not want to admit it, instead accusing people, well in that situation the child usually complains to the teacher if his friend is lying" (Interview with teacher N).

Through consistent and integrated religious and moral education in daily life, lying behavior in early childhood can be prevented. This education not only prevents despicable acts, but also fosters a strong, resilient, and responsible personality. Children who are accustomed to being honest from an early age will grow into individuals who can be trusted, liked by their friends, and become the next generation with noble morals. With various appropriate approaches, such as providing role models, creating a conducive atmosphere, conveying values through media that are appropriate to the child's age, and involving all parties, the goal of religious and moral education in preventing lying behavior can be achieved optimally (Siswanta, 2017).

"The lack of children's moral education has an impact on the behavior of children who are impatient and easily angry with the teacher who is teaching, such as impatient and speaking harshly when the teacher takes a long time to teach his friend and he has to wait a long time". (Interview with teacher N).

According in their study it was found that children tend to lie or prank teachers at school. The impact of YouTube content causes children to imitate inappropriate actions such as pranking. Childhood is a crucial phase in a child's development, where they quickly absorb knowledge and tend to imitate what they see. At school, the child pranked his teacher inspired by what he saw on YouTube. During the lesson, the child seemed to cry, was reluctant to study, refused to write, and did not want to do any assignments. However, when the break came, the child looked happy while playing and stopped crying. This action was often repeated on various occasions.

Given the importance of character development at an early age, researchers are interested in studying this issue. The purpose of this study is to explore how the values of honesty conveyed through moral beliefs can become a strong moral foundation, enabling children to avoid the negative influences of their environment and increasingly accessible social media in their daily activities.



Figure 1. The process of learning faith and morals

From the results of classroom observations, early childhood showed that learning about honesty was mostly done through stories, songs, and role-playing. The teacher used puppets and pictures to explain the concept of honesty and the consequences of lying. The children seemed enthusiastic about participating in the activities, especially the role-playing. The teacher gave praise and small gifts to honest children. The cheerful and fun classroom environment supported the learning process. However, the duration of learning about honesty was relatively short, and had not been integrated with other activities in the classroom.

Learning is integrated into various activities, such as storytelling, role-playing, and routine class activities. She uses methods that are fun and easy for children to understand, such as songs, fairy tales, and pictures. She emphasized the importance of providing examples of honest behavior and giving praise to honest children. She also said that the challenge is maintaining consistency in learning and ensuring that all children understand the concept of honesty. She also said that young children still find it difficult to distinguish between imagining and lying. (Interview with teacher N).



Figure 2. Documentation of interviews with teacher

From the interview results, Parents stated that they support the teacher's efforts in instilling the value of honesty in children. They also explained that they apply the same methods at home, such as setting examples of honest behavior, giving praise, and explaining the consequences of lying in a way that is easy for children to understand. They also expressed the importance of consistency in educating children at home and at school. A positive and supportive learning environment strongly supports learning about honesty. The teacher creates a safe and comfortable classroom atmosphere for children to express their feelings and thoughts. The teacher also provides examples of honest behavior through their actions and words.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that learning of faith and morals plays a very important role in shaping the character of early childhood, especially in preventing lying behavior. During early development, children easily absorb values and behaviors from their surroundings, so instilling honesty values from an early age is an important foundation for their moral and spiritual development. The results of observations show that fun learning methods such as storytelling, singing, role-playing, and providing examples and positive reinforcement can help children understand the importance of honesty in

everyday life. In addition, the role of teachers and parents as role models, as well as a safe and supportive learning environment, are important factors in fostering the habit of telling the truth in children.

The implications of these findings indicate the need for integration of Islamic values-based moral education into all aspects of early childhood learning activities consistently and sustainably. The collaborative role between schools and parents also needs to be strengthened so that the values taught do not only stop in the classroom, but also continue to be applied in the home environment. However, challenges are still encountered, such as the limited duration of moral value learning, lack of teacher training in effective teaching methods, and children's difficulties in distinguishing between lies and imagination. Therefore, further research is recommended to explore more creative and integrated moral learning strategies, including the use of digital media that are appropriate for the child's age. In addition, long-term evaluation of the impact of moral education on the formation of children's character is also important to study in order to produce a more optimal and sustainable approach.

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