

## The Concept of Honesty in Javanese People's Perspective

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The aim of this study was to find out the concept of honesty in Javanese perspective. Participants were four Javanese families consisting father, mother, and the first-born adolescent child. The themes that emerges from participants' indepth interview were the meaning of honesty, indicators of honesty, and motives that encourage to be honest. The findings indicate that the Javanese concept of honesty is universal, but the acceptance of dishonesty was influenced by relational aspects. Implications of this results to education setting are discussed.

*Keywords:* honesty, Javanese

Penelitian ini bertujuan mengeksplorasi konsep jujur dalam perspektif orang Jawa. Partisipan penelitian ini adalah empat keluarga Jawa yang terdiri atas ayah, ibu, dan anak remaja sulung. Dari wawancara mendalam terhadap 12 orang partisipan diperoleh tema tentang makna jujur, indikasi jujur, dan motif-motif yang mendorong untuk berperilaku jujur. Temuan eksplorasi mengindikasikan bahwa konsep jujur dalam perspektif orang Jawa bersifat universal, namun penerimaan terhadap ketidakjujuran dipengaruhi unsur relasional. Selanjutnya didiskusikan implikasi hasil penelitian pada dunia pendidikan.

*Kata kunci:* jujur, orang Jawa

Honesty has been one of the fundamental moral values which are universally accepted. However, very few studies have been conducted on honesty this far. Even Carson (2010) stated that very few philosophers focused their writings on the concept of honesty and honesty as a virtuous act. Furthermore, Carson revealed that Aristotle prepared a lengthy analysis on moral virtues. Yet, those writings did not discuss or highlight the concept of honesty. Aristotle discussed *truthfulness*, which was defined as the in-between of talking about oneself with excessive pride and criticizing oneself excessively. *Truthfulness* is related to what one says about one-self. In *Concise Oxford English Dictionary 11<sup>th</sup> edition*, the word *truthful* is defined as telling or expressing the truth, and in synonymity with the word *honest*. Aristotle's exposition did not explain thoroughly the essence of honesty or the clear picture of honesty.

From the search of previous research journals, the concept of honesty has been admitted as fundamental

and essential moral value. Nevertheless, it is still hard to find comprehensive research works on honesty. Exist-ing studies lay greater stress on dishonest acts as lying, cheating, stealing, and fraudulence (Cole, 2001; Eisenberg, 2004; Ennis, Vrij, & Chance, 2008; Gino & Pierce, 2009; Rawwas, Al-Khatib, & Vittel, 2004; Wang & Leung, 2010). More research works on dishonest acts are conducted in order that these negative acts could be minimized. In literary works as *Serat Wulang Reh* and *Serat Sasanasunu*, acting honestly is encouraged (Sukri, 2004; Webe, 2007). The Javanese values of wisdom in the forms of proverbs and maxims also recommend the same act of honesty and describe examples of dishonest acts which should be avoided (Sartono, 2010; Suratno & Astiyanto, 2009). These recommendations are based on the viewpoints that honest acts could save one's life and dishonest acts, on the other hand, could wreak it (Sukri, 2004; Webe, 2007).

Based on the previous conditions, this study endeavors to fill the gap between viewpoint of honesty value concept as a fundamental moral value and very few studies ever conducted on the idea of honesty. This

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study is trying to describe the idea of honesty in the perspective of Javanese people. As published in the several works of literature (Endraswara, 2006; Magnis-Suseno, 2003; Roqib, 2007;), Javanese people heavily stress on harmony in their interpersonal relationship. To balance the social harmony, Javanese people generally pretends (*berethok-ethok*) by not revealing their truest emotions or disguising some information. The Javanese disposition is known as belonging to grey/shady areas (*nggone semu*) and this means Javanese people tend to hide the truth. Therefore, to gain insight of the influence of Javanese culture towards the idea of honesty could be highly engaging.

## Method

This research employed a qualitative approach in order to comprehend the human viewpoints and the behaviors in their contexts. The data were collected through in-depth interviews towards four Javanese families as shown in Table 1. The criteria set on the definition of the so-called Javanese families are those families whose father and mother are from Javanese descents and live in Java – in this case Surakarta. Each of the family members were separately interviewed (in this case, father, mother, and first born sons/daughters). The semi-structured interviews were used in this research and digitally recorded. This interview manual could be observed in the Appendix. After transcrip-

tion, the results of the interviews were investigated using thematic analysis (Hayes, 2000) to discover the surfacing themes. Furthermore, those themes were classified into several categories of themes. In analysis process, the researcher followed the phenomenology method (Creswell, 2007) by escaping himself from the existing theories during the data collection period (through bracketing) and focusing on field data.

## Results and Discussion

Based on the interview results with all the informants, there are three categories of the main themes, among which are, the concepts of honesty, the expected behaviors of honesty, and the motives of honesty.

### The Concept of Honesty

Based on the narration from the informants, honesty contains the following two concepts:

#### **Honesty is related to revealing the right facts.**

The informants here perceived honesty as speaking frankly (by not modifying the truth), being open, revealing the truth simply as truth, and following conscience as it could be seen in the following interview:

Yes, I will try to say the truth though it hurts. I must reveal whatever things are true. Even before the high officials, if I must bear the punishment, I will bear it and I know it is risky. It is easy to preach

Tabel 1

*Demographic Data of Informan*

No.	Family	Status	Name	Gender	Age	Education	Occupation
1.	A	Father	Arman	M	47	Graduate school	Head of bank treasury office
		Mother	Arni	W	40	Undergraduate	Beauty Saloon
		Child	Arya	M	15	Secondary school (3 <sup>rd</sup> class)	---
			Afi	W	12	Secondary School (1 <sup>st</sup> class)	---
2.	B	Father	Bagir	L	47	High school	Private employee
		Mother	Bilqis	P	47	Undergraduate	Bank teller
		Child	Bonita	P	17	High School (3 <sup>rd</sup> class)	---
			Bela	P	13	MTS (2nd class)	---
3.	C	Father	Cepi	L	46	Undergraduate	Civil servant
		Mother	Cici	P	43	Undergraduate	Civil servant
		Child	Coki	L	15	High school (1 <sup>st</sup> class)	---
			Candra	L	11	Elementary school (5th class)	---
			Carli	L	8	Elementary school (2nd class)	---
4.	D	Father	Dino	L	48	Undergraduate	Teacher
		Mother	Dian	P	43	Vocational high school	Housewife
		Child	Dedi	L	17	High school (2 <sup>nd</sup> class)	---
			Dodo	L	4	Early Age Child Education	---

about honesty, but not to execute it. As a result, if our speaking partner could not accept, the risk will be even harder.

(Interview with Mr. Dino, 48 years old)

*Ya sedapat mungkin mengatakan apa yang benar adalah benar walaupun pahit kenyataannya. Jadi apapun yang benar harus katakan benar, walaupun memang di hadapan pejabatpun kalau memang harus mendapat hukuman harus medapat hukuman karena menyatakan kebenaran memang itu resiko. Benar itu memang suk...benar memang suk...mudah diucapkan memang benar, tapi dijalankan sulit tapi akibatnya juga...kalau lawan bicaranya itu tidak bisa menerima kan ya malah lebih berat resikonya.*  
(Wawancara Pak Dino, 48 tahun)

In giving away information to other people, there is always an opportunity to hide some information or manipulate it as disclosed in the following interview with Ms. Bilqis and Ms. Arni:

For me, what is essential is to say what is in my mind; yet, maybe other people think it is still possible to hide some facts or truth...but for me, I just want to be who I am. If we hide something, our conscience will accuse us. (Interview with Ms. Bilqis, 47 years old)

*Istilahnya itu ya omong apa adanya tapi mungkin bagi orang lain mungkin masih bisa dhelik-dhelik'ke nggih.. istilahnya untuk menyenangkan wis gak bisa tapi ' nek saya pribadi memang apa adanya lah, yang penting kalau kita memang ...maksude kalau kita ngumpet-ngumpetin itu kan perasaan itu , tetep- tetep anu nggih wah aku iki kok ngumpetke gini-gini.* (Wawancara Bu Bilqis, 47 tahun)

Honestly... every time I find myself acting in a bit dishonest way – not 100% honest (laughing). Especially when I was a teenage. I polished what I said (laughing). Being honest, in my opinion, means frankness when it doesn't disadvantage or endanger us.  
(Interview with Ms. Arni, 40 years old)

*Jujur itu... Angger anu sok kurang jujur saya itu. Nggak jujur 100 % (tertawa). Lha itu, apalagi pas remaja ya. Polesan-polesan juga (tertawa). Ya kalau menurut saya jujur itu ya mengatakan terus terang dimana juga kita akan terus terang dimana tidak merugikan kita. Terus terang tidak merugikan kita dan istilahnya nggak sampai membahayakan gitu lho.*(Wawancara Bu Arni, 40 tahun)

Based on the interviews with Ms. Arni and Ms. Bilqis, their concepts of honesty were heavily related to plain information given without any hidden motives or emotions and their information delivery was not manipulated. Ms. Arni stated that giving manipulated information is a dishonest act. Delivering manipulated information causes the information recipients to be mystified in tracking the right information. This way, honesty is not only related to revealing the true information but also related to right delivery of information (no manipulation). This is done to ensure the information is properly received by the information recipients. Referring to the existing literature, this understanding of concept is in line with McKay's description (1997). According to McKay, being honest is not only about telling the truth, but also about delivering the truth in a way that it could precisely received with correct impression in accordance with the reality. If the information has been correctly delivered, it could be confirmed as fulfilling the first honest requirement of transfer information (Sweetser, as cited in Scott & Jehn, 1999).

**Honesty means gaining something within correct procedures.** Acts of honesty inclusive in this category are not stealing, not cheating in the exam, and not fraudulent. In the Indonesian Dictionary (Tim Redaksi KBBI (2005) the word *mencuri* (stealing) is defined as taking others' properties unlawfully; *menyontek* (cheating in the exam) is defined as quoting the originals; and the word *curang* (not fraudulent) is defined as being dishonest, crooked, and unfair.

The word honesty is heavily related to one's efforts to obtain one's rights legally. As revealed in the interview with Mr. Dino, stealing one's property or belonging is not an honest act and this will bring us guilt. The following is quoted from Mr. Dino's remarks:

... here is the problem. It was when I went to the market when I was a small boy, grocery shopping. That was what I usually did. At that time, I needed something...I was suddenly quiet and put something into my grocery bag when nobody was around. Deep in my heart, I was always chased by the sin. Just like praying (sholat) – when I haven't done night sholat, I couldn't sleep well. I feel like there is another obligation I haven't fulfilled. Then, after I do the sholat, I could sleep well. So, when I steal someone else's right, I still feel guilty. I know that it's not my right. (Interview with Mr. Dino, 48 years old)

*... masalahnya gini dulu pernah saya itu ke pasar. Nah ke pasar itu kan waktu kecil blonjo masak. Itu kan biasa saya. Itu jujur kelebihan, karena saya butuh*

*itu se...saya diem saya masukan. Tapi dalam hati itu selalu seperti dikejar dosa itu. Seperti halnya sholat itu kalau belum sholat tidur, itu mesti bangun tidur bangun. Kok tidur ga nyenyak gitu seperti dioyak. Kamu masih ada kewajiban yang belum. Nah setelah aku belum sholat itu aku terus sholat itu tidur langsung nyenyak. Demikian juga itu misalnya merasa seperti dikejar dosa, kamu itu masih ... membawa haknya orang lain. Seperti itu sehingga ada e... perasaan beban yang tidak los karena memang itu bukan hak saya. (Wawancara Pak Dino, 48 tahun)*

The efforts to obtain something in a legal way have to be emphasized by parents to their teenage sons/daughters. This message is related to the efforts of academic achievements at schools as informed by Mr. Arman and Ms. Arni who supervises student's behaviors in the exam. This student's name is Arya. The following is part of the interview:

*At school, this far, I have been paying attention that Arya is of congenial personality. Getting bad score is not a nightmare. He didn't even try to cheat in the exam. So thank God he is an honest person....*

*(Interview with Mr. Arman, 47 years old)*

*Kalau di sekolahan, sejauh ini, anak-anak itu saya perhatikan Arya itu enjoy orangnya. Dapat nilai jelek itu cuek. Dia itu berupaya njaplak itu juga nggak. Jadi insya Allah dia jujur..*

*(Wawancara Pak Arman, 47 tahun).*

Thank God, in the case of cheating, I believe my son 100%. Whatever scores he gets, I compliment him. Thank God, this is your score. If possible, work harder to achieve higher score. A boy like Arya will not cheat; he doesn't even know the content of his books. (Interview with Ms. Arni, 40 years old)

*Alhamdulillah kalau dalam hal menyontek saya 100 % sangat percaya dengan anak saya. Karena saya nggak anu Bu, bagaimanapun hasilnya raport, saya puji mereka. Alhamdulillah bijimu semene, paling saya bilang apik meneh yen mbok tingkatke. Kayak Arya itu nggak mungkin nyontek, wong halaman pira ra tau sinau hahaha ...*

*(Wawancara Bu Arni, 40 tahun)*

From the quoted interviews of Mr. Arman and Ms. Arni, it is known that parents believe that their sons/daughters act honestly in their school achievements. Their beliefs in their daughters and sons are due to their discussions with their teachers at school. Based on the previously narrated interviews, one is honest when

one is committed to gain things as money, exam scores, and so on through legal methods in accordance with the prevailing moral values. This second category includes the process involved in achieving or gaining something in accordance with other findings. As mentioned by Koellhofer (2009), one is said to be honest when one conducts oneself respectfully – in this case, no moral values are denied in achieving his rights. Referring to Sweetser's opinion (Scott & Jehn, 1999), the process to gain something in the right way fulfills the second requirement of honesty which is ownership transfer. Furthermore, Scott dan Jehn (1999) mentioned that dishonesty occurs when a responsible actor deliberately violates the convention of ownership transfer by stealing or breaching the information transfer through deception which potentially endangers human being.

Based on the category on the meanings of honesty previously explained, it can be concluded that the concept of honesty is defined as delivering facts and obtaining something in the right way. Conceptually, the essence of honesty in Javanese people's perspective is similar to that in universal one which has been published in a number of other literary works (Koellhofer, 2009; McKay, 1997; Sweetser as cited in Scott & Jehn, 1999).

Acts of honesty previously explained are still related to the influence of moral values which were developed in Javanese culture which encourage men to stay in the path of honesty. This moral teaching was written in the forms of leaves, proverbs, and maxims. As discovered in *Serat Wulang Reh* by Sri Paku Buwono IV (Webe, 2007) it is said that men should avoid being dishonest (*aja nganti kabanjur, sabarang polah kang nora jujur*) because it could wreak men's lives (*yen kabanjur sayekti kojur tan becik*). Men are recommended to seek teachings leading to the truth (*becik ngupaya iku, pitutur ingkang sayektos*). It was also affirmed that men should follow the teachings of truth; even though, they were spoken by commoners. Recommended dishonest acts to avoid are *lunyu* (hesitant, of two minds), *genjah* (not trustworthy), *nyumur gumuling* (unable to keep secrets), *dora* (lying), serta *jahil methakil mbesewit* (deceitful).

Aside from the literary works, Javanese culture is also reflected in proverbs and maxims. One of them is *salah mesthi owah, bener terus nggejejer* which means when one commits mistakes one should change; yet, when one doesn't commit mistakes one should stand upright. This proverb portrays the fact everyone makes mistakes, and in their hearts, they realize their mistakes. If they deny their feelings, there will be a striking difference between their thoughts and emotions which

make them restless. Other proverbs discourage people from being dishonest, i.e. *sing goroh growah*. This means who-ever lies will suffer a terrible loss. This piece of advice is given usually to children to discourage them from lying (Santosa, 2010).

### Acts of Honesty and of Dishonesty

Conceptually, honesty is related to the process of information delivery and the efforts to gain something in an ethical way. The existence of honesty value within oneself could be recognized from the realization of honesty value through his or her behaviors. The following are the forms of acts of honesty and of dishonesty.

Based on the narrated interviews, informants could be classified into three categories, they are, saying what is true, not fraudulent, and not stealing. In further details, acts of honesty could be described as follows:

**First, one needs to say the truth.** Individuals deliver information they hear truthfully. What informants could do to deliver information truthfully is by delivering without reducing, adding, or hiding the information as what Ms. Bilqis confirmed in the following:

In my opinion, it is better to express what is in our mind than to hide it. Anyway, people will find out. Maybe it's hard to accept the truth for some people. Yet, they will understand one day. That's all I can say. (Interview with Ms. Bilqis, 47 years old)

*Kalau saya mending omong apa adanya daripada nanti kita itu ngendem-ngendem kan lama-lama juga akan keluar juga...(tertawa kecil) dari-pada efeknya itu besoknya itu tambah semakin baik, mending sekarang der...der...der...sudah, ya sudah. Mungkin bagi orang yang menerima dengan kejujuran itu, salah paham ya. Ibu, aku itu sudah jujur gini, gini, gini ..kok..itu..kok.., tapi biarlah, nanti kan tahu sendiri apa yang saya maksudkan begini, gitu..hmm ..hmmm..gitu aja saya sih.*  
(Wawancara Bu Bilqis, 47 tahun)

Ms. Bilqis preferred to reveal the information as it was with a consequence of uncomfortable situation – a misunderstanding in this case. However, Ms. Bilqis hoped that as time passed, people could understand what she truthfully meant.

Dishonesty occurs when one utters lies. In this case, individuals deliver information which is different from facts or manipulate information delivered and this brings different perceptions on individuals receiving information. Based on the interview, dishonest act (cheating in the exam) done by teenagers (Arya, Coki,

and Dedi) at school has not been found out by their parents. As revealed in the previous section, both Arya's parents believed that Arya did not cheat at school since Arya confirmed that his scores came from his own efforts when he was asked by his parents. So did Coki when he was asked by his mother Ms. Cici as shown in the following:

For example, when my mom asked me, "Did you cheat in the exam; how was it?" I said, "I did it myself. But actually I did it with some help. You know I couldn't say that to my mom.... The most important thing is I did some of them myself, right?" (Interview with Coki, 15 years old)

*Ya misalnya [ditanya ibu] "Tadi di sekolah nggak nyontek tha, tadi di sekolah ngerjainnya gimana, ngerjain ulangan?" Ya aku ngerjain sendiri. Terus abis itu sama sedikit bumbu tapi itu nggak tak omongin ....(IR : Hmm) yang penting ngomongin, yang penting kan ada yang tak kerjain sendiri.*  
(Wawancara Coki, 15 tahun)

At school, Coki did his test on his own; yet, he experienced difficulty. Then, he decided to cheat in the test. When asked by his mother, Coki replied that he did the test by himself. Coki said he did not lie; he only hid some truths since he did some numbers of the test himself. What Coki did was hiding part of information which his parents did not tolerate.

**Second, one needs to act fairly.** Individuals are said to be fair when he admits something which is his right and does not corrupt others. By acting fairly, it means individuals keep themselves far away from acts which disadvantage people as taking one's portion or position unethically. From the narrated interviews, there were two types of fraudulence – each with its own specific reasons. Two types of fraudulent acts disclosed during the interviews are cheating in exam and making orders for thesis writing. In cheating during the exam, the exam participants obtained the test scores which actually were not their rights. Some participants ordered theses and recognized them as theirs.

In further details, acts of fraudulence revealed during the interviews could be explained as follows: (a) Cheating during the exam by opening the book or making notes on little pieces of paper. This method was done by Coki together with his friends opening and reading the books. Books used during cheating in the exam were put in the holey ceilings of bathroom. One by one, Coki and his friends asked permission to go to bathroom when the test was given. (b) Asking to or reading friends' answers. Reading friends' answers

was done by Mr. Cepi when he furthered his study. He used the codes Dedi, Arya, and his other friends had agreed with before. (c) Working together with friends in doing the exam. Mr. Arman stated that the exam was done together with his friend when he was furthering his study. (d) Asking someone to work on someone else's assignments using financial compensation. This act was done by Mr. Dino who asked a thesis writing service bureau to write his thesis. This bureau also helped prepare him in facing the thesis exam.

In the Indonesian Dictionary (2005) the synonym of the word 'fraudulence' is behaving unfairly. This means individuals acting fraudulently behave unfairly. This is due to the fact that individuals tried to gain something unethically. In the cheating case, individuals gain exam/test scores they had been expecting by opening notebooks or asking friends. Those methods could not be justified during the exam.

**Third, individuals should be discouraged from stealing.** This means individuals should not take away others' properties without permission and use them for personal or group interests. Examples of this habit of stealing is revealed during the interviews with Mr. Dino:

It was raining when we were on our way home. There was a rich woman in Jongke. Her purse hooked to the key fell. So, three of us – Joko, Bangun, and I opened the purse and we found thousands of rupiahs. At that time, we did not yet have fifty-thousand-rupiah note. Thousands of rupiahs have been something to us. You know I was in my third year of middle school and I hadn't paid my school fee...I felt guilty but I decided to return it anyway. Who knows I will be introduced to someone as the compensation when I return the purse? But, in fact, she just counted them and said thanks. Ya...learning to be honest is tough, you know. (Interview with Mr. Dino, 48 years old)

*Waktu pulang sekolah itu mau hujan kemudian ada seorang ibu juragan itu di Jongke gitu. e...dulu kendaraan itu ada dompetnya kemudian kuncinya itu dompet itu digandulke di kunci itu, jatuh. Saya buka bertiga saya teman saya ini, Joko sama si Bangun. Saya buka itu uang waktu itu puluhan ribu banyak sekali. Belum ada uang 50an itu belum ada, puluhan itu banyak itu masih uang berharga. Karena itu saya tau ya namanya anak muda kan jek SMP kelas tiga belum ujian tu belum bayar lho... karena takut berdosa terus dibawa oleh wong ayu itu tadi udah dikembalikan saja ngko lak dikenalke*

*yo entuk opah gitu. ternyata ngetung tok terima kasih, diunek-onekke. Ya udah itu hasilnya e...belajar jujur memang berat. (Wawancara Pak Dino, 48 tahun)*

From the interview with Mr. Dino, a big picture was captured and it confirmed that when one found someone else's property, one should return it. In the case of Mr. Dino, the owner of the property was someone he knew.

Dishonesty related to ownership of a property occurred when one takes someone else's property without permission. Act of taking someone else's (i.e. institution) properties without permission and utilizing it for the group interest in Ms. Cici's through the use of blank bill as shown in the following interview:

Then, when it comes to accountability report, there is always something hidden. When it came to 17<sup>th</sup> August – the celebration of our Independence Day, our budget, for example, for buying office stationery was one million rupiahs which were realized as 500 thousand. We would ask from the copy center a blank bill and the remaining 500 thousand could be modified as costs for fuel, etc. This funding will be further classified or divided. My staff need not know about it. This is how we become dishonest sometimes. (Interview with Ms. Cici, 43 years old)

*Terus nek masalah peng-SPJ-an itu yo enggak jujur, misale lho, beli ATK lha misale wong misale kita itu mbak arep pitulasan apa ada di anggaran untuk beli seragam tujuh belasan, misale kita lomba, kan enggak ada..tertuang disitu kan enggak ada, akhirnya apa eh ATK anggarane pira, misale 1 juta..wis tukokne tenan ning sing 500 wae, sing 500 mengko kan toko kan minta persen mbak, kita minta cap nota kosong itu kan minta persen, dia minta anu...anu 5% dari yang di SPJ itu beberapa. Lha aturane kita bawa gitu, terus bensin, yo fotokopi..misalnya fotokopi itu kan itu akumulasi itu kan untuk kegiatan-kegiatan kita itu nanti juga dibagi lagi. Tapi yo mesti dhuwur yo kudu kenek meneh, maksude kalau sudah akhir tahun, itu kan anak buah itu kan enggak perlu tahu, lha itu mungkin sing marai ra jujur. (Wawancara Bu Cici, 43 tahun)*

Based on the interview, within the working environment where Ms. Cici is, acts of dishonesty occurred in the forms of misuse of institutional funding by a group of people. The funding given was spent on snacks, sports uniforms (for competitions on Independence Day), eating out, and bribing their head of office.

In the previous explanation, honest acts are defined as saying the truth, behaving fairly, and not stealing. When further observed, some dishonest acts could be socially accepted, and some others may be socially rejected – all of which depend on the underlying motives which will be discussed in the following sections.

### Motives of Honest and Dishonest Acts

Theoretically, attitudes could be classified into several parts, they are, cognition, affection, and conation. Honest acts themselves are divided into three domains, they are, faith which underlies cognitive aspect, emotion which accompanies when individuals act honestly as affective aspect, and honest acts as conation aspect. As informed by Bandura in his social cognitive theories, one important aspect underlying individual behaviors in reaching their goals is intention. Thus, in discussing the dynamics of honest acts, three domains will be highlighted, they are, faith, emotion, and intention.

In relation with faiths, all participants stated that they believe that honest acts are good acts and need to be nourished. These faith backgrounds come from their parents' advice and life experienced by participants. Six participants stated that one should act honestly since Almighty God watches every move one makes. Belief in God's supervision encourages individuals to act honestly even though nobody is around. Acts of honesty must also be based on the belief that man will be held accountable for his deeds before God, as revealed in the subsequent interview results:

a. God watches our every move. As Ms. Arni explained beforehand when she asked her son to wear his glasses, Arya refused to do so and said that he would wear them later. Ms. Arni told Arya that God knows their every move. The following is the interview with Ms. Arni:

One day when he was not in the mood, Arya tried to find excuses for wearing his glasses. His reasons were 'later', 'I will, later', and 'why don't you believe me?'. From there, I asked his friends. They said, 'He wore them, Ma'am, on the bus.'

(Interview with Ms. Arni, 40 years old)

*Nah suatu ketika dia mungkin nggak mood. Kacamata, kacamata, engko wae. Kacamata sik, engko wae. Kalau biasane dia kalau kacamata engko wae gitu, gitu ya, engko tenan ya, Allah yang Maha Tahu, tak kasih. Terus nanti saya tanya temannya dia. Dia tadi pakai kok Tante, di atas bis pakai.* (Wawancara Bu Arni, 40 tahun)

Ms. Arni's unwavering faith in God's supervision on man's behaviors is in line with Javanese culture "Gusti ora sare" - meaning God never sleeps. This expression reflects a belief that God never sleeps and therefore, He always watches our every move.

b. Honest people will find safety as confirmed by Mr. Arman in the following interview:

Honesty is a factor which plays an essential role. Honest people will find peaceful lives, and thank God, they are safe. I work in financial sector and this is the area where honesty is needed the most' (Interview with Mr. Arman, 47 years old)

*Jujur itu memang faktor yang harus dijaga benar. Orang jujur itu hidupnya akan tenang, dan juga Insya Allah selamat pasti. Apalagi saya bekerja di sektor keuangan di mana faktor kejujuran itu sangat diutamakan.*

(Wawancara Pak Arman, 47 tahun)

In line with what Pak Arman said, Ms. Bilqis stated honest people will live comfortably. The following is the interview:

Living honestly in this world makes our lives peaceful. For me, everywhere I go, I see that honest people always live great lives. I know sometimes they experience difficulties or hardship... (laughing), but still, their lives are great and those people are satisfied with their lives. We should not hide an unhealthy emotion; it's gonna haunt us back all the time. (Interview with Ms. Bilqis, 47 years old)

*Wong urip ki nek digawe jujur ki mlakune kepenak, cuman gitu aja Bu, bagi saya sendiri lho itu... (tertawa kecil) (IR: hemm...) wong jujur itu nang endi-endi iku mlakune kepenak, ya istilahnya mungkin itu kadang jujur itu ajur ya ada, nggih... jujur ajur ki ada.. (tertawa kecil) cuman khan untuk kepuasan batin itu selalu ada, itu, iya tho...daripada kita ngendem rasa sing ora bener tapi khan anu... istilahnya nanti membuat kita kepikiran terus. (Wawancara Bu Bilqis, 47 tahun)*

From those two interviews, it is obvious that Mr. Arman and Ms. Bilqis have faith in being honest since it will bring good impacts on the doers. In Javanese culture, Mr. Arman and Ms. Bilqis' beliefs in being honest is in line with the maxim "wong sing jujur bakal mujur" (those who walk in the path of honesty will be blessed).

c. Honest people will be trusted by others, as advised by Ms. Bilqis to Bonita. Here is the interview summary with Ms. Bilqis.

Yes...always and always this, the main point is to apply them to mbak Bonita, younger sister. Basically honesty is one thing we have to prioritize and wherever we stay honest to ourselves and others, it means we can be trusted. When someone cannot be trusted any longer, life becomes difficult. (Interview with Ms. Bilqis, 47 years old)

*Ya ...selalu dan selalu ini, pokoknya menerapkan ke mbak [Bonita], adik, pokoknya kejujuran itu satu hal yang diutamakan dan masalahnya apa, dimanapun kita jujur itu Insyaallah kepercayaan itu bisa dipegang, kalau orang sudah ndak dipercaya itu sulit sekali. (Wawancara Bu Bilqis, 47 tahun)*

The same advice at the beginning was given to Ms. Bilqis by her parents. The advice was then continued to Bonita and became one of the references in behaviors. Ms. Bilqis gave Bonita some advice because she had been seeing how it helped her go through life struggles.

The information above sends a message that individual honest acts should be based on good deeds and spiritual beliefs, that is God's supervision and one's accountability before God. The basics of honest acts revealed in the interview when reviewed from Kohlberg's theory (Rice & Dolgin, 2008) reflect moral development stage at the first level, that is orientation towards punishments to accept when one does not act honestly.

Impacts of honest acts like safety (after interview with Mr. Arman) and peacefulness (after interview with Ms. Bilqis) also strengthen individual beliefs in behaving honestly. Even though one has a belief that there is a point in behaving honestly, one does not always act honestly. For example, one may tell lies in some situations. This way, domain of their beliefs or faiths could not serve as the basis of the criteria of honest acts. Implementation of faiths or beliefs in behaving honestly is also influenced by other domains, namely, emotion and intention.

The second domain in honest or dishonest acts is emotion/feeling. Emotion that comes along with honest or dishonest acts may appear before an action is committed, as long as an action is committed, or after an action is committed. Emotion that came along before one acted dishonestly was not revealed during the interview with Bonita. Bonita was convinced that acting dishonestly broke their religious teachings and

made them sin against God. Bonita did not feel peaceful when she was tempted to cheat during the exam. This uncomfortable feeling suddenly surfaced and made Bonita decide to act honestly by doing the exam on her own. The kind of emotion which Bonita experienced after acting honestly by doing exam on her own is peacefulness.

Emotion which accompanies honest acts is also expressed by Ms. Bilqis. Explicitly Ms. Bilqis mentioned that by acting honestly, her heart was at peace even though her honest acts were not always positively welcomed by those around her. Ms. Bilqis realized that her honest acts sometimes made people around her feel uncomfortable. Nevertheless, Ms. Bilqis preferred to be honest. Ms. Bilqis predicted that if she did not act honestly, there might be problems later. Ms. Bilqis believed that when her honesty caused discomfort to people around her, usually this discomfort lasted only awhile. When others understood why she did that, the discomfort disappeared.

Emotion which come after one acts dishonestly is guilty, sinful, and burdened conscience. This guilty feeling was revealed by Ms. Arni who told the interviewer about her experience when she was a teenager. She manipulated information for her parents that she may escape punishment as narrated in the following:

For example, when I was going with a man. My father asked me where I had been. Then, I said that I just dined out. My father continued asking me with whom I was going. I lied to him by saying that I was out with friends; even though, actually I was just out with a man. I didn't lie since there were many people in the restaurant... (Interview with Ms. Arni, 40 years old)

*Misalnya saya pergi sama anu sama cowok gitu. Terus nanti ditanya [oleh Bapak], "saka ngendi?" Anu kok saka makan-makan. Ya bener makan-makan. "Karo sapa?" [tanya Bapak]. Karo kanca-kanca. Terus, "okeh apa ora?" [tanya Bapak]. Padahal saya cuma berdua. Terus ya okeh gitu. Terus saya gini. Okeh kan makan-makan karena di rumah makan itu banyak orang. Kan aku nggak ngapusi... (Wawancara Bu Arni, 40 tahun).*

Yet, in other opportunities, Ms. Arni felt uncomfortable after realizing that she didn't act honestly.

...in what I said, sometimes, there was a lie. Afterwards, I felt regretful. (Interview with Ms. Arni, 40 years old)

...saya ngomongnya iki kalau pas ya, kalau ada



*yang terselip ngapusi ngono kuwi terus aduh, aku kok ngapusi. (Wawancara Bu Arni, 40 tahun).*

This guilty feeling was explained by Ms. Bilqis when she used her school fee (during her high school) as working capital for selling bags. The high school fee was paid the following month. Even though her parents did not receive any billing information from her school administration, Ms. Bilqis did not feel at peace. Finally, Ms. Bilqis quit all her trading activities and informed her parents about her activities.

Statement about hurt conscience was expressed by Mr. Cepi who was required to fill in the survey data which had not been successfully obtained from survey respondents through estimations. When the survey was left blank, the data could not be analyzed and became useless.

The burdened feelings were expressed by Mr. Bagir when he faced a situation which made Mr. Bagir lie. The first situation was when Mr. Bagir took care of his mother who suffered from rectum cancer at the hospital. When his mother asked him whether she suffered from stomach ulcer, Mr. Bagir nodded. In this case, Mr. Bagir lied to calm his mother down. The second situation was when Mr. Bagir had to keep other people's trust. Mr. Bagir was given something by X and asked not to inform Y. When Mr. Bagir was asked by Y whether he was given something by X, Mr. Bagir responded that he was not. In this case, Mr. Bagir did tell a lie to maintain his relationship with X, and the relationship between X and Y. According to Mr. Bagir, this burdened feeling is much harder than in the second situation than in the first one.

Experience in committing dishonest acts done by teenagers (as Arya) is revealed in the following interview with his mother – Ms. Arni:

There was an assignment. The assignment was to draw a map and it was submitted today when there was a spare time. Actually Arya had not done yet the map drawing. Yet, he was looking for excuses to escape from punishment. At first, he mentioned that he was given three days for submission. Then I asked who his teacher was. He said “Mr. X was my teacher.” I called his teacher and he said that Arya hadn't done anything yet. On one occasion, he said he already made a mess of his map drawing. On another occasion, then, he said his work was left at school. Then, I finally asked him to start the drawing all over again. (Interview with Ms. Arni, 40 years old)

Ini tadi ada tugas, misalnya. Ada tugas itu membuat peta dan ini dikumpulkan hari ini tapi ada kelong-

garan karena aku rada nyorek sithik terus tak setip. Terus ini boleh anu boleh besok pagi. Dikasih waktu 3 hari. Kemarin yang kejadian, dikasih waktu 3 hari. Oh ya gurumu siapa? Pak ini. Terus dia udah nggak ada, saya lihat nomer teleponnya, terus saya telepon. [kata gurunya] durung garap blas Bu, gitu (tertawa). Oh iya Pak, aku ngono. Wis ayo gek digarap, jare ndek wingi kesetip. Sing kesetip endi? Sing kecorek endi? Mesti kan eneng ... Anu kok, mau ketinggalan di sekolahan. Ya wis nek ketinggalan di sekolahan saiki gawe dari awal, saya gitu jadi (tertawa) (Wawancara Bu Arni, 40 tahun)

Based on the interview with Ms. Arni, some information was obtained that Arya did not work on his school assignment. When asked by his mother, Arya answered that he had done it but it was erased. In this case, Arya experienced difficulties to deliver the right information since he had done something wrong by not doing the assignment given by his teacher. Finally, Arya delivered false information to save himself from his parents' rebuke.

Another example of dishonest acts could be seen in the following interview with Mr. Arman:

In some things, I am not honest. For example, my wife forbids me to play futsal. But, you know, it's my hobby. Sometimes I ask Arya to bring two pairs of shoes. He knows that I want to play futsal once in a while. Then, Arya was asked by his mother. He said that I would be a referee only. In fact, I played the game. Actually, my wife forbade me because I fell when I was playing. Also, I have dust allergy and still many other things. But, once again, it's my hobby. That is the dishonesty that only Arya knows. (Interview with Mr. Arman, 47 years old)

*Ada beberapa hal saya nggak jujur, misalnya kayak saya kan dah nggak boleh main futsal sama istri saya. Tapi namanya orang hobi. Kadang-kadang Arya itu saya ajak juga, main futsal. Mas, nggawa sepatu loro ya. Dia kan tahu kalau saya itu kadang-kadang pingin. Terus dia [Arya] tu nganu [ditanya Uminya], “Ora paling dadi wasit thok.” Padahal saya ikut main. Sebenarnya istri sudah melarang, karena beberapa kali saya jatuh pada saat main, sakit. Alergi debu dan sebagainya. Tapi namanya orang hobi itu gimana. Nah itu pernah, ketidak-jujuran saya itu diketahui Arya, gitu lho. Tapi kalau sama istri saya itu nggak. (Wawancara Pak Arman, 47 tahun).*

Based on the interview, it is revealed that Mr. Arman

has been forbidden to play futsal by his wife since he ever fell during the game. One day, Mr. Arman was playing futsal with his son. After he had arrived home, his wife asked him about his participation in futsal game. He said that he did not join the game. In this case, Mr. Arman was dishonest-by breaking his promise to his wife. He also delivered untrue information to his wife.

From the explanation above, it is understood that individuals in risky situations tend to face unpleasant consequences after choosing to deliver information different from the facts they know. Individuals will deliver true information when they act honestly also. When individuals did not act honestly, they will experience difficulty in delivering the true information. Individuals are encouraged to be dishonest so that they may be kept away from unpleasant consequences.

The previous explanation confirmed that generally honest acts are accompanied with peacefulness. On the other hand, dishonest acts provoke uncomfortable feelings such as guilty and sinful feelings. However, the interview results confirmed that dishonest acts does not always provoke guilt. The feelings that accompanies honest or dishonest acts depend on individual thoughtful consideration in behaving. Dishonest acts based on motives to care for one's ill mother as done by Mr. Bagir did not provoke guilty feelings since this was based on the strong drive to save his mother. On the other hand, guilty feelings are visible in dishonest acts with personal motives as the use of blank bill as informed by Ms. Cici and the cheating case as revealed by Coki. Yet, the guilty feelings had been neutralized by social environment acceptance towards the dishonest acts. In this case, social environment viewed the dishonest acts as something normal and, therefore, there was no social sanction given.

The result of data exploration confirmed that individual honest and dishonest acts are based on objectives and consideration or other specific reasons. There are several objectives to reach through honest acts, they are: safety, peace, and comfort. Also, there are several reasons for honest acts as: (1) transcendence factor: belief in God's supervision, (2) relationship factor: to be trusted and appreciated by others, and honoring others, and (3) subjective factor: following the conscience. When reviewed using moral development theory from Kohlberg (Rice & Dolgin, 2008), faith in God's supervision is classified as moral development level one, relationship factor refers to moral development level three, and subjective factor points to moral development level six. Transcendence and relationship factors were revealed in all participants. Meanwhile,

subjective factor was only seen in one participant (Ms. Bilqis) who stated that when she acted honestly, she felt at peace with herself.

On the other hand, dishonest acts could provoke restlessness, discomfort, overwhelmingness, guilt, sinfulness, and hurt conscience. Nevertheless, dishonest acts could still be done with the following reasons: (1) protecting oneself from punishment or unpleasant situation; (2) gain financial and non-financial profits for personal and group use; (3) maintaining amicable social relationship; (4) preserving others' trust, and (5) helping or saving other people. Reasons which encourage participants to act dishonestly show various levels of participants' moral development. Reasons to protect oneself from punishment are a realization of development level one which is oriented to punishment. Those who gain personal benefit portray moral development level two oriented to instrumental hedonism. Reasons to maintain social relationship with other people reflect moral development level three, and encouragement to save others reflects moral development level five oriented to social contract principles.

Related to motives of dishonest acts, McLeod and Genereux (2008) identified four types of lies through the motives, they are: (1) altruistic: helping or protecting other people, (2) conflict avoidance: avoiding conflicts with other people, (3) social acceptance: adjusting or to be liked by others, and (4) self-gain lies: gaining benefits materially for ourselves. The most accepted type of lies is altruistic, and the most unacceptable is self-gain lies. Meanwhile, social acceptance and conflict avoidance are in-between.

There are several similarities in findings explored in McLeod and Genereux (2008), they are, altruistic motive (helping or saving other people), conflict avoidance motive (maintaining social relationship), and personal benefit motive (gaining benefits on personal or group basis). The two other motives are: preserving others' trust and protecting oneself from punishments or unpleasant situations both of which are not revealed in McLeod and Genereux research. However, motives to protect oneself from punishments or unpleasant situations have become one of the motives for some people to lie as discussed by Carson (2010). The emergence of preserving other people's trust in this research have confirmed the indication of relational element in honest and dishonest acts considerations. Maintaining close social interactions with other people becomes essential. In other words, there is a motive to maintain other people's trust in fulfilling individual needs to preserve one's prestige (*jaga praja*) as someone who can be trusted by others.

Based on the result of the research, individual's vested interests to maintain social relationship with others serve as motives which encourage individuals to act dishonestly. This means that in deciding to act honestly or dishonestly, individuals consider the elements of the existence of other people he encounters. This condition is similar to Aguilar's findings (2002) about honesty concepts in the Philippines. In Tagalog, the word *katapatan* is related to the concept of honesty, faithfulness, sincerity, dan uprightness. To be *tapat*, one should be faithful and sincere, since in *katapatan* concept, one should consider relationship element, aside from truth or correctness. In other words, when one is *tapat*, one should always consider the existence of other people encountered, staying around, and connected in a relationship. This means they should ponder others' feelings or emotions, aside from the truth material faced by them.

Based on the cross-cultural studies, inter-cultural differences in accepting dishonesty are highlighted. Lee, Cameron, Xu, Fu, and Board (1997) wrote that culture which stresses on maintaining harmonious interpersonal relationships in East Asia encourage its people to be able to accept lies which could help individuals to adjust with the group and prioritize group needs. Similar conditions are also found in this study through its method *dora sembada* (lying for good reasons) as dishonest acts which still could be accepted by Javanese society. In other words, those who lie but has good intentions as avoiding unwanted consequences for goodness' sake are still allowed to lie. *Dora sembada* method is used to take care of oneself so that they may not hurt others (Santosa, 2010). This way one's good relationship in families or society could be maintained. The use of *dora sembada* method could be found in the actions of Mr. Bagir, Ms. Arni, and Mr. Arman. Mr. Bagir lied to hide the doctor's diagnosis result of an illness his mother suffered from in order that his mother could be at peace. Ms. Arni acted dishonestly by hiding her real emotion toward her aunt (*budhe*) when giving *hantaran* (gifts delivery). She admitted that she did that without sincerity. Mr. Arman lied to his wife after playing futsal in order to preserve his relationship with his wife.

At the same time, a study Fu, Lee, Cameron, and Xu (2001) highlighted cultural differences in concept of lies. Chinese and Canadian people have similar perspectives in categorizing truthful statements as truth and untrue statements as lies in situations of antisocial acts. However, there is striking difference between Chinese and Canadian people in understanding lies to conceal their good deeds. Chinese people

tend to conceal their good deeds and this concealment is not considered as lies. This is because their culture does not allow them to 'broadcast' their good deeds. The Canadians believe that good deeds should not be concealed. Acts done by the Chinese are their efforts to adjust themselves with the prevailing social norms because harmonious relationships with the environment are considered important in self-concept of Eastern people with its interdependence characteristics.

Generally, objectives that participants want to achieve from acting honestly are still in line with the discussion in the existing literature, that is attaining safety (Webe, 2007) and attending to moral values by behaving sensibly or prioritizing others' welfare. Moral values could originate from religious teachings that God sees everything we do under the sun which is also well reflected in Javanese proverbs "*Gusti ora sare*". However, reasons which accompany honest acts in details are still hard to find in literary works since many of them focus more on examining dishonest acts with the consideration that one day anticipatory actions could be taken to prevent those acts. In this study, it is also revealed that moral values functioning as reference for individuals in acting honestly could originate from conscience, religious teachings, and cultural teachings.

## Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that honesty concept according to Javanese people's perspective are characterized as universal or similar to the existing honesty concept. In implementing the honesty concept, individuals should consider other people's existence, those around them, and those who have close relationship with them. This act of attending to others' existence is to harmonize social relationship with others. Therefore, in acting honestly, one attends to not only materials of truth but also information delivery. In addition, information recipient's feeling is one thing to consider. The importance of social relationship with others for individuals trigger individuals to act dishonestly for the sake of maintaining social harmony. In Javanese society, especially, white lie (*dora sembada*) is one of the dishonest acts which can be socially accepted. This way, relational motive may become one of the triggers of dishonest acts. Similar conditions also occur to other societies which stress the importance of social harmony as found in Chinese communities.

Honest acts must be characterized by a belief in God's supervision on all that men do. Motive encou-

raging individuals to act honestly is their obedience to religious teachings (God) and their assurance that they will earn safety and trust from other people, which Kohlberg's moral development theory claims as development levels one and three. The stage of the moral development indicate that honest acts are still dominated by environmental control, and have not grown internal control yet.

Lacking internal drive to act honestly has caused environmental situations to easily influence individuals to act honestly or dishonestly. In facing social situations risky for oneself, that is experiencing conflicts with others or bearing punishments, individuals tend to choose to act dishonestly. Thus, for individuals, to be in harmonious social relationships or punishment-free conditions is viewed as more essential than to act honestly but bearing the risk. The drive to obtain something from the acts committed seems stronger than the readiness to bear the risk to uphold values of honesty.

The implication of this study on education is the development of honesty values of individuals which requires support to develop individuals' moral reasoning. The expectation is that this moral reasoning could support individuals in making daily practical decisions so that they may not be under the influence of external supervision (fear of punishment), and able to develop through internal orientation, that is the principles of ethics or conscience.

Honesty concept in this study is still at its earliest stage. Further and deeper study will be conducted in the future to examine the generalization of honesty concept within broader sense of community. Besides that, in further research, demographic factors as age, sex, profession, and social situations faced by individuals in being honest, need to be considered.

### Acknowledgement

Many thanks to the Directorate of Research and Public Service, Directorate General of Higher Education (Dit. Litabmas Ditjen Dikti) who have funded this research project using the Doctor's Dissertation Grant through DIPA UGM 2011 Scheme.

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*Appendix follows*

## Appendix

### Interview Guide

1. How do participants respond to honest acts within the community?
2. How important are honest acts in participants' lives?
3. According to the participants, what is honesty?
4. How do participants learn about their concepts of honesty?
5. How do the participants (based on answer of number 4) teach their concepts of honesty?
6. When asked to rate their own honesty (in the range of 1-100), what scores do the participants assign themselves for their own honesty?
7. Why do the participants assign such scores for themselves?
8. How are participants' experiences related to dishonest acts?
9. How do participants feel when acting dishonestly?
10. Once in a while, one lies for good reasons. How are the participants' experiences related to this?
11. What efforts have been done by participants in teaching honesty to their children?
12. How do participants supervise their children's behaviors or actions in the case of honesty and dishonesty?

*Note.* Questions numbers 1-10 are for teenagers and their parents; questions number 11-12 are for parents only.