



Honesty Canteen as a Project-Based Learning Model for Strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile in Elementary Schools

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Abstract: This study examines the Honesty Canteen program as a project-based learning strategy for strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile in an elementary school. Using a qualitative case study design, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis involving 22 participants, including the principal, teachers, canteen managers, students, and a parent representative. Data were analyzed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña interactive model with triangulation to ensure trustworthiness. The findings show that the program was implemented through five interrelated strategies: habituation, role modeling, participatory supervision, reward mechanisms, and values internalization. Quantitative records indicated that students' honesty rate increased from 51% at the initial phase to 100% after pedagogical interventions such as role-play and collective reflection, with an average of 91%. Qualitative evidence further showed moral internalization through students' voluntary confession and restitution behaviors. The study concludes that the Honesty Canteen can function as a contextual P5 model that supports integrity, independence, and global diversity in the Pancasila Student Profile.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengkaji program Kantin Kejujuran sebagai strategi pembelajaran berbasis proyek untuk memperkuat Profil Pelajar Pancasila di sekolah dasar. Dengan desain studi kasus kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan analisis dokumen yang melibatkan 22 partisipan, terdiri atas kepala sekolah, guru, pengelola kantin, siswa, dan perwakilan orang tua. Data dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña dengan triangulasi sumber dan metode untuk menjamin keabsahan temuan penelitian. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa program dilaksanakan melalui lima strategi yang saling terkait, yaitu pembiasaan, keteladanan, pengawasan partisipatif, mekanisme penghargaan, dan internalisasi nilai. Catatan kuantitatif menunjukkan tingkat kejujuran siswa meningkat dari 51% pada fase awal menjadi 100% setelah intervensi pedagogis seperti bermain peran dan refleksi kolektif, dengan rata-rata 91%. Bukti kualitatif juga memperlihatkan internalisasi moral melalui pengakuan kesalahan dan pengembalian pembayaran secara sukarela. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa Kantin Kejujuran dapat berfungsi sebagai model P5 kontekstual yang mendukung integritas, kemandirian, dan kebinekaan global secara berkelanjutan di sekolah dasar.

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A. Introduction

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia reflects a broader global shift toward competency-based, student-centered, and character-oriented education. Across many education systems, schools are no longer expected to focus solely on academic achievement, but also on cultivating ethical dispositions, collaboration, autonomy, and creativity as essential competencies for the twenty-first century. In the Indonesian context, this shift was formalized through the introduction of the Merdeka Curriculum in 2022, which was designed to respond to the learning crisis intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic and to improve national educational quality amid persistently low international learning outcomes, including Indonesia's PISA performance (Januarita et al., 2023; Kemendikbud, 2021; Setiawan & Puspitasari, 2023). At the core of this reform is the Profil Pelajar Pancasila, a national character framework that emphasizes faith and noble character, global diversity, mutual cooperation, independence, critical reasoning, and creativity (Gunawan & Dewi, 2022; Gianistika, 2022). Within this framework, honesty is not merely a moral expectation but a foundational value that supports the formation of responsible, trustworthy, and socially competent learners.

The urgency of strengthening honesty in elementary education is particularly high because this stage represents a formative period in moral development. According to Suyadi (2020), elementary school is the most strategic period for shaping values that can endure throughout life, while Lickona (2019) emphasizes that character formation requires repeated moral experiences, not merely declarative instruction. However, empirical evidence shows that dishonest behavior among school-aged children remains a concerning issue. A University of Indonesia study reported that 45% of elementary students admitted lying to avoid punishment, 59% submitted friends' work as their own, and 30% took goods without payment (Universitas Indonesia, Fakultas Psikologi, 2019). Similarly, the Ministry of Education's report indicated that 40% of teachers observed students giving false excuses, while 30% of students admitted cheating (Kemendikbud, 2020). More recent findings also identified fear, lack of confidence, academic pressure, and insufficient character education programs as contributing factors to declining honesty among students (Fatahuddin et al., 2025). These findings suggest that honesty is not a marginal issue but a serious educational problem that requires structured, context-based intervention.

Theoretically, this study is grounded in the view that character education must integrate knowledge, practice, and habituation. The *Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (P5) provides an important pedagogical pathway for this goal because it enables learners to experience values through authentic activities rather than abstract moral teaching alone (Gunawan & Dewi, 2022; Suryani & Putra, 2022). In this regard, the Honesty Canteen offers a promising learning environment because it requires students to make moral decisions in real situations involving trust, responsibility, and self-regulation. This aligns with social learning theory, which explains that children internalize values by observing the behavior of significant adults and peers (Bandura, 2018; Narinasamy & Mamat, 2023). It also aligns with experiential learning theory, which posits that meaningful

understanding develops through cycles of concrete experience, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation (Kolb & Kolb, 2017; Morris, 2020). In addition, habituation theory emphasizes that repeated practice in virtuous settings gradually transforms external compliance into internal character (Lickona, 2019; Kristjánsson, 2020). Taken together, these perspectives indicate that honesty can be cultivated most effectively when students encounter consistent opportunities to practice, reflect on, and internalize moral action in everyday school life.

Previous studies have shown that character education programs can contribute positively to students' moral development (Berkowitz, 2021), but most of them remain limited in scope or design. Research on Adiwiyata programs, anti-corruption education, and other school-based character initiatives has demonstrated that contextual programs can support integrity formation (Azizah & Amalia, 2023; Bustan & Mailani, 2022; Khobir & Manisa, 2022; Palangda et al., 2023). In relation to Honesty Canteen programs specifically, Putrie et al (2023) and Yatim et al (2023) have shown that such programs can promote student honesty and independence, while Cahyani & Hidayat (2023) found that honesty canteens are effective when combined with habituation and experiential learning. Hasanah et al (2023) also emphasized the importance of active learning in strengthening P5 implementation. Nevertheless, much of the existing literature tends to treat the Honesty Canteen as a stand-alone school program rather than as an integrated project-based learning model embedded in the Merdeka Curriculum. In addition, previous studies often emphasize general implementation outcomes without examining the internal mechanisms that produce change, such as role modeling, participatory supervision, reward structures, and reflective internalization. This suggests that although the topic has received attention, the conceptual and empirical development of the model remains incomplete.

The research gap in this study lies in the absence of a detailed, integrated explanation of how a Honesty Canteen can function as a structured P5 project rather than merely a school culture initiative. Existing studies generally report that honesty can increase after program implementation, but they rarely explain how the process unfolds step by step, how multiple actors contribute to the change, or how daily pedagogical routines translate into internalized moral commitment. Furthermore, prior research has not sufficiently examined how quantitative indicators of student honesty can be interpreted alongside qualitative evidence of confession, restitution, and moral reflection. Another gap concerns the relationship between the Honesty Canteen and the broader dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile. Many studies mention honesty as a value, but fewer show how it may simultaneously strengthen other dimensions such as independence, mutual cooperation, and noble character. In this sense, the present study addresses a conceptual gap, a methodological gap, and an empirical gap by examining not only whether the program works, but how, why, and in what educational framework it works.

The novelty of this study lies in positioning the Honesty Canteen as a structured and replicable project-based learning model within the Merdeka Curriculum, rather than as a peripheral school tradition. Unlike previous studies that often describe isolated

implementation outcomes, this research conceptualizes the program as an integrated system composed of five mutually reinforcing strategies: habituation, role modeling, participatory supervision, reward mechanisms, and values internalization. Another novelty is methodological: the study combines qualitative case study evidence with daily financial performance records as an indicator of honesty development, thereby offering a more nuanced picture of student behavior over time. This approach also allows the study to capture both external compliance and internal moral growth, including voluntary confession and restitution, which are rarely documented in similar studies. By linking observable transaction data with reflective moral behavior, the study provides a stronger empirical basis for understanding how character education can be translated into measurable educational practice.

Accordingly, this study addresses three research questions: what strategies are employed in implementing the Honesty Canteen as a project-based learning strategy for strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile; what supporting and inhibiting factors affect its implementation; and how the program contributes to the internalization of honest and independent character values aligned with P5 dimensions. The study aims to analyze the implementation of the Honesty Canteen as an authentic educational practice that strengthens character formation in elementary schools. Its contribution is both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, the study extends the literature on character education by showing how moral development can be cultivated through a contextual project-based model supported by social learning, experiential learning, and habituation. Practically, it offers a replicable framework for schools seeking to translate the philosophical ideals of the Merdeka Curriculum into concrete, sustainable, and measurable educational practices.

B. Method

This study employed a qualitative case study design to examine how the Honesty Canteen program functions as a project-based learning strategy for strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile in an elementary school setting. A qualitative case study was considered the most appropriate approach because it enables an in-depth understanding of a bounded educational phenomenon in its real-life context, where meaning, interaction, and lived experience are central to the analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018). The study was conducted at Mutiara Bunda Elementary School in Bandung, Indonesia, which was purposively selected because the school had implemented the Merdeka Curriculum for at least two years, integrated the Honesty Canteen into its *Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (P5) activities, and demonstrated a strong institutional commitment to character education through formal policies and routine programs. The research took place over four months, from August to November 2024, to allow prolonged engagement and rich contextual understanding. Participants were selected through purposive sampling (Campbell et al., 2020) and included 22 individuals: one principal, three classroom teachers, two canteen managers, fifteen students from grades 4, 5, and 6, and one representative of the parents' association. This composition was intended to capture multiple perspectives on

how the program was planned, implemented, supervised, and experienced by the school community.

Data were collected through three complementary techniques to ensure methodological triangulation (Flick, 2018). First, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with all participants to explore their perceptions, experiences, and reflections regarding the Honesty Canteen program. Each interview lasted approximately 45–90 minutes, was audio-recorded with consent, and transcribed verbatim (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). Second, participant observation was carried out in fifteen sessions during the canteen's operational hours to observe student behavior, transaction practices, interaction patterns, supervision procedures, and the overall learning atmosphere. Field notes were recorded systematically using an observation guide developed prior to data collection (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Third, document analysis was performed on school curriculum documents, Honesty Canteen guidelines, student reflection journals, financial records, photographs, and school policy documents, which provided contextual and longitudinal evidence supporting interview and observation data (Tight, 2019). In qualitative research, the researcher functions as the primary instrument (Nowell et al., 2017; Olmos-Vega et al., 2022), but to improve consistency and analytical rigor, supporting instruments were also used, including interview protocols, observation checklists, document analysis sheets, and field note templates. These instruments were designed based on the conceptual framework of character education and P5 implementation, then validated through expert judgment and pilot testing in a non-participant setting.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles et al (2020), which involves data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing with verification. During data condensation, all interview recordings were transcribed and coded using ATLAS.ti version 9 (Friese, 2019). Open coding produced 187 initial codes, which were then organized through axial coding into 24 categories. Selective coding yielded five core themes: habituation, role modeling, participatory supervision, reward mechanisms, and values internalization. In the data display stage, findings were organized into matrices, thematic maps, and tables to identify patterns and relationships, while financial records were used to visualize changes in student honesty rates over time. In the conclusion drawing and verification stage, emerging interpretations were continuously checked through comparison across data sources and participant groups. To ensure trustworthiness, the study applied triangulation of data sources and methods, member checking (Birt et al., 2016), and an audit trail documenting analytical decisions and procedural steps (Carcary, 2020; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Ethical approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, and informed consent was secured from all adult participants, while parental consent and child assent were obtained for student participants.

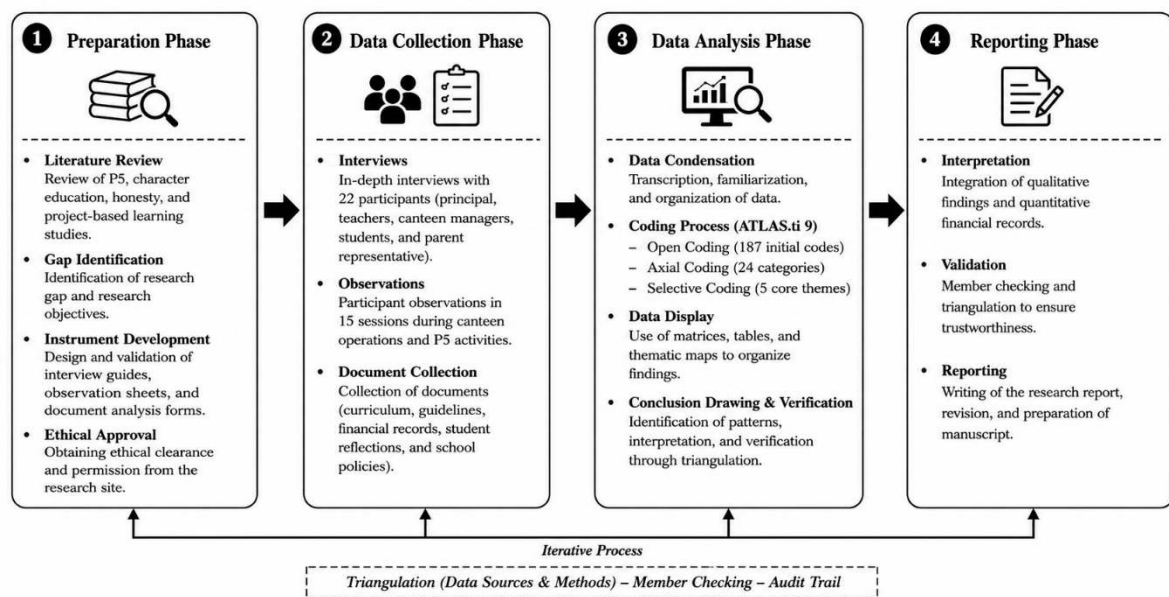


Figure 1. Research Flow of the Study

Figure 1 presents the research flow of the study, illustrating four sequential yet interconnected phases: preparation, data collection, data analysis, and reporting. The preparation phase involves literature review, research gap identification, instrument development, and ethical approval. The data collection phase includes in-depth interviews with 22 participants, participant observation conducted in 15 sessions, and document analysis comprising curriculum documents, financial records, and student reflections. The data analysis phase highlights a systematic coding process using ATLAS.ti, including open coding (187 initial codes), axial coding (24 categories), and selective coding that generated five core themes. The reporting phase involves interpretation, validation through member checking and triangulation, and manuscript preparation. Importantly, the figure also emphasizes the iterative nature of the research process, where data collection and analysis occur concurrently, supported by continuous verification through triangulation, audit trail, and participant validation. This systematic and recursive flow ensures the rigor, credibility, and trustworthiness of the qualitative findings.

C. Result

This section presents the empirical findings derived from the qualitative case study conducted at Mutiara Bunda Elementary School, organized according to the three research questions that guided this investigation: (1) what strategies are employed in implementing the Honesty Canteen program as a project-based learning strategy for strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile; (2) what supporting and inhibiting factors affect the implementation of the Honesty Canteen program; and (3) how the Honesty Canteen program contributes to the internalization of honest and independent character values aligned with the Pancasila Student Profile dimensions. The findings are primarily grounded in qualitative data obtained through interviews, observations, and document analysis,

which provide an in-depth understanding of processes, interactions, and meanings constructed by participants.

At the same time, to complement and strengthen the interpretation of behavioral patterns observed qualitatively, this study also incorporates quantitative financial records from the Honesty Canteen as an embedded form of supporting evidence. These records do not function as the main analytical basis, but rather as an indicative measure that helps illustrate the consistency and development of students' honest behavior over time. Therefore, the integration of qualitative insights and quantitative indicators allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how the program operates in practice, capturing both the process of character formation and its observable outcomes.

Implementation Strategies of the Honesty Canteen Program
The Honesty Canteen program at Mutiara Bunda Elementary School represents a concrete operationalization of the *Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (P5) within the Merdeka Curriculum framework. Based on comprehensive analysis of interview data from the school principal, three classroom teachers, two canteen managers, fifteen students, and one parents' association representative, triangulated with fifteen participant observation sessions and documentary evidence, the implementation of the Honesty Canteen integrates five main strategies that work synergistically to foster student character development.

Strategy 1: Habituation Through Routine Program Operation

Habituation is implemented through the consistent and sustainable operation of the Honesty Canteen as a daily school routine. The canteen operates every school day during designated break times at 09:30 and 12:00, as well as at dismissal time at 15:00, providing regular and predictable opportunities for students to practice honest behavior. This consistent scheduling ensures that honesty becomes embedded in the daily rhythm of school life rather than treated as an occasional or special activity. The school principal emphasized the foundational role of consistency in character formation:

"We operate the Honesty Canteen every school day without exception. There are no holidays for honesty. This consistency helps students understand that honesty is not a once-in-a-while activity but a daily practice that becomes part of their character through repeated experience. When students know that every day they will face the choice to be honest or not, they begin to internalize that honesty is simply how we do things here." (Principal, interview, September 12, 2024).

The importance of habituation was further reinforced by a sixth-grade teacher who observed the developmental progression in students' behavior over time:

"At the beginning of the school year, we saw many students hesitating, some making mistakes with payments, and occasionally we noticed items taken without payment. But after several months of daily practice, most students now go through the transaction process automatically. They take their items, put money in the box, take their change, and move on without needing to think about it. That's what habituation does it transforms conscious effort into automatic behavior." (Teacher 3, interview, September 22, 2024).

Beyond these qualitative observations, the development of students' honesty behavior can be more clearly understood through temporal patterns derived from financial records. Rather than representing isolated outcomes, these data illustrate how honesty evolves progressively across different stages of program implementation. To provide a clearer visualization of this pattern, Figure 2 presents the trend of students' honesty rates over the observation period.

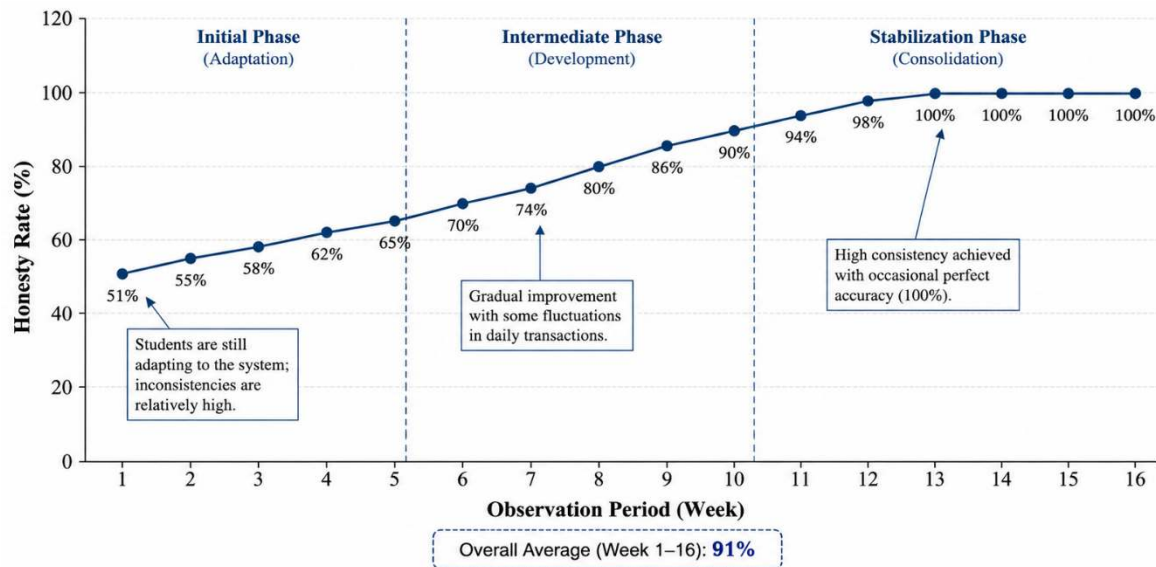


Figure 2. Trend of Students' Honesty Rate Over Time in the Honesty Canteen Program

As shown in Figure 2, the trajectory of students' honesty rates follows a clear developmental pattern rather than a linear progression. In the initial phase, the honesty rate begins at 51% and increases gradually, indicating a period of adaptation in which inconsistencies in transactional behavior are still relatively high. Entering the intermediate phase, the rate shows a steady upward trend, reaching approximately 70%–90%, which suggests reduced discrepancies and improved behavioral alignment with expected norms.

From a descriptive statistical perspective, this pattern reflects a reduction in variability over time, where fluctuations in daily transactions become less pronounced. However, the presence of minor variations across observation periods indicates that the improvement process is not entirely stable, but influenced by contextual dynamics such as peer interaction, situational awareness, and time constraints during canteen use.

In the stabilization phase, the honesty rate reaches repeated instances of 100%, with an overall average of 91%, indicating a high level of behavioral consistency. Nevertheless, this apparent stability should not be interpreted as absolute perfection. Instead, it reflects a condition in which honest behavior becomes more predictable, while still allowing for occasional fluctuations and compensatory actions, such as overpayment observed in certain periods. Therefore, the quantitative trend presented in Figure 2 supports the qualitative

findings by demonstrating that honesty development occurs as a gradual, dynamic, and context-dependent process.

Strategy 2: Role Modeling by Educators and School Leadership

Role modeling emerged as a critical strategy wherein teachers and school leadership demonstrate exemplary honest behavior in their daily interactions with students and staff. This strategy is grounded in the understanding that students learn not only from explicit instruction but also from observing the behavior of significant adults in their environment. During observation sessions, the principal and teachers were consistently observed modeling honest behavior in various contexts, including returning extra change when accidentally overpaid, admitting mistakes openly, and discussing honesty as a personal value rather than merely a school rule. A fourth-grade teacher articulated the intentionality behind this modeling:

"When students see us being honest whether it's returning extra change that a parent accidentally gave too much, or admitting when we've made a mistake in class, or explaining why we returned a lost item we found they learn that honesty is not just something we expect from them. It is something we value for ourselves. We don't just tell them to be honest; we show them what honesty looks like in real situations." (Teacher 1, interview, September 15, 2024).

The influence of role modeling is also indirectly reflected in the improvement of transaction accuracy over time, suggesting that students' behavioral adjustments are shaped not only by procedural routines but also by the internalization of observed norms. In this sense, the quantitative data reinforce the qualitative evidence that social modeling contributes to the normalization of honest conduct within the school environment.

The impact of this role modeling was evident in student interviews. A fifth-grade student described how observing teacher behavior influenced his own understanding of honesty:

"One time, I saw my teacher accidentally get too much change at the school cooperative. She noticed immediately and returned the extra money. She said, 'This isn't mine, so I have to give it back.' I thought about that later when I was at the Honesty Canteen. If my teacher returns money that isn't hers, then I should too." (Student 7, interview, October 5, 2024)

Strategy 3: Participatory Supervision Through Transparent Monitoring

Participatory supervision involves regular monitoring and evaluation that engages all stakeholders in tracking the development of students' honest attitudes. The principal implements a systematic daily reporting process wherein canteen managers conduct financial reconciliation after each operational day, comparing actual revenue with expected revenue based on inventory taken. These results are communicated to teachers via the school's WhatsApp group, who then facilitate classroom discussions with students about

the findings. This approach transforms supervision from a top-down monitoring activity into a collective responsibility shared by the entire school community. The canteen manager described the daily reconciliation process:

"Every day after school, I count the money in the payment box and the change box. Then I count what goods were taken from the shelves. I calculate what the revenue should have been based on the prices. Then I report to the principal: 'Today we expected IDR 277,000, but we received IDR 277,000 exactly,' or sometimes, 'Today we expected IDR 314,000 but we only received IDR 265,000.' The principal shares these numbers with the teachers, and the teachers talk with their students about what the numbers mean. It's not about catching anyone. It's about all of us knowing together how we are doing." (Canteen Manager 1, interview, September 20, 2024)

The participatory nature of this supervision was emphasized by the principal:

"When I announce the daily results, I don't say, 'Someone didn't pay today.' I say, 'Yesterday, our canteen had a deficit of IDR 49,000. What might have happened? What can we do differently today?' This invites students to reflect rather than feel accused. It makes them part of solving the problem rather than just being the problem. Over time, students have become very invested in seeing the honesty rate reach 100%. They celebrate when it happens and think together about what went wrong when it doesn't." (Principal, interview, September 12, 2024)

Strategy 4: Reward Mechanisms for Positive Reinforcement

Reward mechanisms are implemented through a structured recognition system that acknowledges and celebrates honest behavior. The school's "Student of the Week" award is presented every Monday morning during the weekly assembly to students who demonstrate responsibility, discipline, and honesty in their interactions, particularly during Honesty Canteen transactions. Recipients receive a special pin and public recognition, and their names are announced to the entire school community. This system aligns with principles of positive reinforcement, where recognition of virtuous behavior encourages its continuation and inspires emulation by peers. A fifth-grade student who received the award described the experience:

"I felt very happy when I got the Student of the Week pin. My friends congratulated me, and my parents were proud. It made me want to always be honest. When I see other students getting the pin, I try to be like them. It makes me think about my behavior and want to do better." (Student 7, interview, October 5, 2024).

A classroom teacher explained the selection process and its pedagogical purpose:

"We don't just choose students who have perfect records. We look for students who show growth, who make good choices, who help others understand the canteen procedures. Sometimes we choose a student who admitted a mistake and corrected it. That's powerful for other students to see that honesty isn't about never making mistakes; it's about what you do

when you realize you made one. The award sends the message that the school values integrity, and that recognition matters.” (Teacher 2, interview, September 18, 2024).

Strategy 5: Systematic Values Internalization Through Reflective Practice

Values internalization is systematically integrated through various pedagogical methods designed to help students move beyond external compliance toward genuine internal commitment to honesty. These methods include role-playing activities that simulate Honesty Canteen transactions in a low-stakes environment, classroom discussions that explore the meaning and importance of honesty, circle time sessions where students share their experiences and learn from peers, and reflective dialogues that connect canteen experiences to broader ethical principles. A sixth-grade teacher elaborated on the internalization process:

“We don’t just talk about the canteen rules. We discuss why honesty matters for ourselves, for our friends, for our school community. We read stories about honesty from different cultures. We discuss what happens when people don’t trust each other. The students start connecting their canteen experiences to bigger ideas about trust and integrity. When a student says, ‘I paid extra today because I remembered I underpaid yesterday and wanted to make it right,’ that’s internalization. They’re not following a rule; they’re following their conscience.” (Teacher 3, interview, September 22, 2024)

The principal described the role of reflective practice in the internalization process:

“Every Monday morning, we have what we call ‘Honesty Reflection Time.’ We look at the week’s results together. If there were deficits, we ask, ‘What happened? How can we do better?’ If there were surpluses, we ask, ‘Why did some students pay extra?’ The students share their thoughts, and we listen. This reflection is not about shaming anyone; it’s about building awareness and collective commitment. Over time, students start holding each other accountable in positive ways. They remind each other to pay correctly, to take the right change. That’s when you know the values are becoming internalized.” (Principal, interview, September 12, 2024)

Program Structure and Transaction Flow

The Honesty Canteen operates on a self-service, self-payment system that embodies the principles of trust and responsibility. Figure 3 illustrates the physical structure of the canteen, including the arrangement of display racks, price lists, payment boxes, and informational signage. Figure 3 presents the sequential transaction flow that students follow during each visit to the canteen.

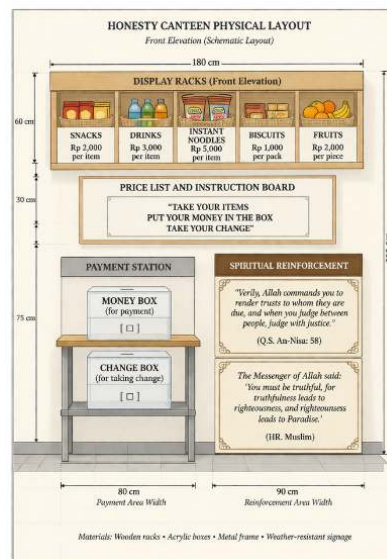


Figure 3. Physical Structure of the Honesty Canteen

Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the integrated design of the Honesty Canteen, encompassing both its physical structure and transaction flow system. The canteen is organized as a self-service environment with clearly labeled product displays, a payment box, a change container, and instructional signage that guides students to complete transactions independently. This arrangement reflects a trust-based learning approach, where students are responsible for selecting items, calculating payments, and managing change without direct supervision, thereby fostering honesty and self-regulation in authentic contexts.

The transaction process begins with students selecting items and calculating the total cost, followed by placing payment and taking change as needed. This individual process is complemented by a collective accountability mechanism, in which daily financial reconciliation is conducted by canteen managers to compare expected and actual revenue. The results are communicated to teachers and discussed with students through reflective activities. This integrated system demonstrates how physical design, behavioral practice, and participatory monitoring work together to create a continuous cycle of action and reflection, supporting the development of students' moral awareness and accountability over time.

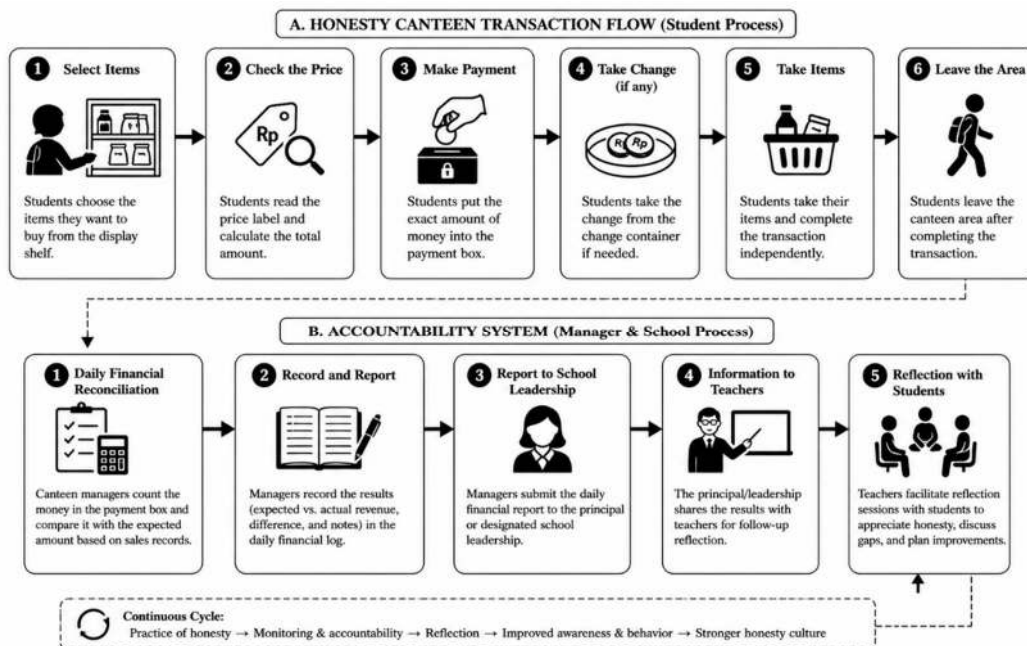


Figure 4. Honesty Canteen Transaction Flow and Accountability System

Taken together, the findings demonstrate that the Honesty Canteen program operates as a coherent and integrated system of character formation rather than a set of isolated practices. The five identified strategies, namely habituation, role modeling, participatory supervision, reward mechanisms, and values internalization, function synergistically in reinforcing students' honest behavior. Habituation provides continuous exposure through repeated daily practice, enabling students to develop behavioral consistency. Role modeling establishes normative expectations, where teachers and school leaders embody honesty as a lived value rather than a prescribed rule. Participatory supervision ensures transparency and collective accountability, transforming monitoring into a shared reflective process. Reward mechanisms contribute to positive reinforcement, encouraging the replication of honest actions, while reflective practices facilitate deeper moral internalization by connecting experience with ethical reasoning.

Importantly, these strategies operate in a recursive and mutually reinforcing manner. Behavioral practice developed through habituation is strengthened by social influence, validated through collective monitoring, and internalized through reflection. This dynamic interaction is further supported by quantitative evidence showing a progressive increase in honesty rates from 51% to consistent peaks of 100%, alongside qualitative indicators such as voluntary confession and restitution. These converging findings suggest that the effectiveness of the Honesty Canteen lies in its ability to integrate experiential learning, social modeling, and reflective practice into a sustained pedagogical ecosystem. As such, the program not only promotes observable honest behavior but also supports the transformation of external compliance into internalized moral commitment aligned with the dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile.

D. Discussion

Although the findings demonstrate a substantial increase in students' honesty rates from 51% to 100%, with an average of 91%, these results require more critical interpretation beyond their surface-level success. While the improvement appears to confirm the effectiveness of the integrated strategies of habituation, role modeling, participatory supervision, reward mechanisms, and values internalization, the occurrence of perfect honesty rates may reflect conditions that are not entirely attributable to internalized moral development. In relation to the first research question, these findings suggest that the identified strategies are indeed effective in shaping observable behavior; however, their effectiveness may also be influenced by situational dynamics rather than purely intrinsic transformation.

In particular, the possibility of the Hawthorne effect should be considered, where students modify their behavior due to awareness of being observed within a structured and continuously monitored system. The daily financial reconciliation and public reporting mechanisms, although pedagogically valuable, may unintentionally create a context in which students behave more honestly because they know their actions are being indirectly evaluated. This indicates that participatory supervision, while functioning as a supporting factor in program implementation, may simultaneously act as a constraining factor by shaping behavior through external visibility rather than internal conviction, thereby directly relating to the second research question concerning supporting and inhibiting factors.

In addition, the presence of participatory supervision and collective reflection may introduce elements of social desirability bias, where students act in ways that align with expected moral norms to gain approval from teachers and peers. The reward system, such as the "Student of the Week" recognition, may further reinforce this tendency by positioning honesty as a socially rewarded behavior rather than a purely internalized value. While such reinforcement is consistent with behaviorist and social learning perspectives (Bandura, 2018; Narinasamy & Mamat, 2023), it raises the question of whether students' honesty is driven by intrinsic moral commitment or by external validation and recognition, which is central to understanding the depth of value internalization addressed in the third research question.

Moreover, the transparent monitoring system and collective discussion of financial discrepancies may create subtle forms of social pressure that influence student behavior. Even though the program is designed as a non-punitive and reflective process, the public nature of reporting and the shared responsibility for outcomes may lead students to conform to group expectations. This aligns with findings in experiential and habituation-based learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2017; Lickona, 2019), where repeated exposure and social context shape behavior, but it also suggests that behavioral consistency does not automatically equate to deep moral internalization. In this sense, instances of honesty rates reaching or exceeding 100% may not solely indicate moral excellence, but could also reflect overcompensation behaviors or heightened collective awareness within the monitored environment.

Therefore, while the integration of social learning, experiential learning, and habituation theories provides a strong explanatory framework for the observed improvements, the findings should be interpreted with caution. The quantitative data serve as an important indicator of behavioral change, but they do not fully capture the complexity of students' moral reasoning or the stability of honesty across different contexts (Narvaez, 2016; Snarey & Samuelson, 2022). The qualitative evidence of voluntary confession and restitution offers stronger support for internalization; however, even these behaviors may still be influenced by the structured environment in which they occur. Consequently, in answering the third research question, the Honesty Canteen program can be understood as effectively fostering the development of honest behavior, yet the depth and authenticity of internalized values remain contingent upon broader contextual and psychological factors beyond observable performance.

E. Implication

These findings imply that effective character education within the Merdeka Curriculum requires the design of structured and integrated learning ecosystems rather than isolated moral programs. The Honesty Canteen model demonstrates that character formation can be strengthened when behavioral practice, social modeling, participatory monitoring, and reflective activities are systematically combined in everyday school routines. This suggests that schools should move beyond symbolic or incidental character initiatives and instead embed values such as honesty into authentic, repeatable learning contexts that allow students to experience, evaluate, and internalize moral actions over time (Fullan, 2020). At the same time, the findings highlight the importance of incorporating both qualitative and quantitative indicators in assessing character development, while remaining critical of potential biases in behavioral measurement. Therefore, educators and policymakers are encouraged to adopt adaptive, reflective, and data-informed approaches in implementing P5 programs, ensuring that character education is not only visible in practice but also sustainable and meaningful across diverse educational settings.

F. Limitation and Suggestion for Further Research

Despite the promising findings, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the use of financial records as an indicator of students' honesty, while useful in capturing observable behavior, cannot fully represent the complexity of moral development. Honesty in transactional contexts may not necessarily reflect broader ethical consistency across different situations. In addition, the occurrence of perfect and surplus honesty rates suggests the possibility of contextual influences such as peer dynamics, increased awareness due to monitoring, or social desirability effects, which may affect the authenticity of measured behavior. Second, the study was conducted in a single school with specific institutional characteristics, including strong leadership and an established culture of character education, which may limit the transferability of findings to other contexts. Third, the

relatively short duration of the study constrains the ability to assess the long-term sustainability of behavioral change and the persistence of internalized values beyond the intervention period.

Building on these limitations, future research is recommended to adopt more comprehensive and longitudinal approaches to better capture the dynamics of character development over time. Multi-site studies involving diverse school contexts are needed to examine the adaptability and scalability of the Honesty Canteen model across different educational settings. In addition, future studies could integrate mixed-method designs that combine behavioral data with psychological or attitudinal measures to provide a more holistic understanding of moral internalization. Further exploration is also needed to investigate how contextual factors such as peer influence, school culture, and family background interact with program implementation. Such research would not only strengthen the empirical basis of character education models but also contribute to the development of more robust, context-sensitive, and sustainable strategies for implementing the Pancasila Student Profile in practice.

G. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the Honesty Canteen program can function as an effective project-based learning model for strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile when implemented as a structured and integrated system. The findings reveal that the program operates through five interconnected strategies, namely habituation, role modeling, participatory supervision, reward mechanisms, and values internalization, which collectively create a continuous cycle of practice, reflection, and reinforcement. This integrated approach enables students to move beyond surface-level compliance toward the development of consistent and internalized honest behavior. Quantitative evidence showing a substantial increase in honesty rates, supported by qualitative indicators such as voluntary confession and restitution, confirms that authentic and sustained learning experiences play a critical role in character formation.

The discussion further highlights that the effectiveness of the program is not solely determined by the presence of activities, but by the dynamic interaction between pedagogical design, social influence, and reflective processes. By combining experiential learning, social modeling, and habituation within a participatory and transparent system, the Honesty Canteen fosters both individual responsibility and collective moral awareness. These findings reinforce the importance of embedding character education within meaningful, context-based practices that are continuously monitored and reflected upon. At the same time, the study underscores the need for critical interpretation of behavioral indicators, acknowledging that measurable outcomes must be understood alongside deeper processes of moral internalization.

Overall, this study contributes to both theory and practice by offering a more comprehensive understanding of how character education can be operationalized within the Merdeka Curriculum through authentic project-based learning. The Honesty Canteen

model provides a replicable framework for schools seeking to integrate the values of the Pancasila Student Profile into everyday learning environments. By emphasizing systemic integration, continuous engagement, and reflective practice, this study affirms that character education is most effective when it is not only taught, but consistently experienced and collectively sustained within the educational ecosystem.

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